

# **MORALITY**

## **ITS CONCEPT AND ROLE IN ISLAMIC ORDER**

***Dr. Mohammad Muslehuddin***

**Ph.D. (London)**

# CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Introduction</i>	.. v
<i>Chapter 1—Morality</i>	.. 1
<i>Chapter 2—Classical Theories</i>	.. 5
(a) Plato : Evil is due to lack of knowledge	.. 5
(b) Aristotle : The Doctrine of the Golden Mean	.. 6
(c) Hedonism	.. 8
(d) Cynicism	.. 9
(e) Stoicism	.. 10
(f) Spinoza : The Ethics	.. 11
(g) Bentham and Stuart Mill : Utilitarianism	.. 12
(h) Kantian Moral Philosophy	.. 13
<i>Chapter 3—Analysis and Assessment</i>	.. 17
(a) Subjectivism	.. 21
(b) Objectivism	.. 24
<i>Chapter 4—Good life</i>	.. 29
<i>Chapter 5—Concept of Morality in Islam</i>	.. 35
<i>Chapter 6—Islamic Law</i>	.. 41
<i>Chapter 7—Moral Act</i>	.. 43
<i>Chapter 8—Moral Conduct</i>	.. 47
<i>Chapter 9—Moderation—The Principle of Islamic Life</i>	.. 55
<i>Chapter 10—Moral Values and the Islamic Social System</i>	.. 59
(a) Economics of Islam	.. 60
(b) Politics of Islam	.. 62
<i>Chapter 11—Distinctive Features of Islamic Moral Philosophy</i>	.. 81
<i>Chapter 12—Predestination</i>	.. 91
<i>Bibliography</i>	.. 97
<i>Arabic Titles</i>	.. 99

## **BY THE SAME AUTHOR**

- ☆ **Insurance and Islamic Law**
- ☆ **Banking and Islamic Law**
- ☆ **Commonwealth of Islamic Countries and  
the Muslim World Bank**
- ☆ **Economics and Islam**
- ☆ **Sociology and Islam**
- ☆ **Islam, its Theology and the Greek  
Philosophy**
- ☆ **Islamic Socialism-What it implies**
- ☆ **Mut'a (Temporary Marriage)**
- ☆ **Islamic Jurisprudence and the Rule of  
Necessity and Need**
- ☆ **Philosophy of Islamic law and the  
Orientalists**

## INTRODUCTION

Morality or Ethics is the most important but incomplete subject of Philosophy. In a variety of moral judgements, which do not appertain to the ethical characteristics of the object, morality is merely a rationalization of the needs and wishes either of the person judging, or of the society to which he belongs. The judgements, as such, do not report upon the nature of the thing judged about but upon the condition of the judgement-maker. 'To adopt the modern term', says Joad, 'the status of such judgements is that of 'wish fulfilments' and they have no more validity than the smoker's belief that tobacco ash is good for the carpet' (Joad, *Philosophy*, p. 130).

As the needs, wishes, desires, traditions, and advantages of the judgement-makers vary, so do the ethical judgements which rationalize them. Morality, therefore, does not stand upon its own feet; it is always pursued for the sake of something else, and is valued as a means to an end but never as an end in itself.

Nietzsche, therefore, adopts an attitude of moral relativism. To him, that only is good which leads to enhancement of the will to power, and because in different times and climes it is possible to achieve this result with the help of different moral devices, he did not see any point in prescribing a universal code of morals. Hedonists, on the other hand, hold that pleasure is the sole good and the end, while many ends, says Dewey, seem good when we are under the influence

of strong passion which in actual experience and in such thought as might have occurred in a cool moment are actually bad (Dewey, *Ethics*, p. 205). Further, pleasure itself is without a basis, as it depends upon the existing state of a person, for instance, what pleases in health is distasteful in illness.

In the absence of any standard for ethical judgments, it cannot be said, in definite terms, that there is any virtue. And what is more, even justice which is said to be an unchanging virtue is subject to change. 'It is sometimes interpreted to signify strict retribution, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Herbert Spencer gives another meaning to the principle, and employs this meaning to justify a thorough going policy of 'laissez-faire' in social matters. He identifies the principle of justice with the relation of cause and effect in its biological meaning, that is with natural selection and the elimination of the unfit in the struggle for existence. It is 'just', he asserts, that the inferior should stand the consequences of their inferiority and that the superior should reap the rewards of their superiority. To interfere with the workings of natural selection is thus to violate the law of justice. In other words, Spencer uses the abstract principle of justice to warrant a policy of extreme individualism in letting the 'natural' play of self-interest in a competitive society take its course' (Dewey, *Ethics*, p. 274).

To Nietzsche, justice is the right of strong man—might is right. There are many instances cited to indicate the complete falsity of the common notion that justice carries its definite meaning. The truth lies on the other side. Those who hold that there is general

agreement among men on all moral fundamentals seem to be guided by concepts that are taken vaguely and apart from practical application. Justice, as described, is to give to each that which is his due. 'But is individualistic competitive capitalism a just system? or Socialism or Communism? Is inheritance of large fortunes, without rendering of personal service to society, just? What system of taxation is just? What are the moral claims of free-trade and protection? What would constitute a just system of the distribution of national income? Few would question the desirability of chastity, but there are a multitude of interpretations of its meaning. Does it mean that celibacy is more pleasing to God than marriage? What is the relation of chastity as a moral idea to divorce, birth control, state censorship of literature? Human life is sacred. But what about many of the health-destroying practices and accident inducing practices of modern industry? What about war, preparation for which absorbs the chief part of the revenue of modern states?' (Dewey, *Ethics*, pp. 189, 190).

Obviously, one could go down the list of all the time-honoured virtues and show that changes in conditions have made them a matter of uncertainty and controversy. Moral theories cannot give direct and final answers to these questions, yet the subjectivists hold that their judgements are correct and contend:

1. 'That there can be no differences of opinions about ethical matters, since, if I say 'this is right' and you say 'this is wrong', we are not making two contradictory judgements about the same thing, one of which is correct and the other incorrect; each of us is passing

a judgement about something different, I asserting that the emotion aroused in me is one of approval, and you that the emotion aroused in you is one of disapproval. Hence, unless we are deliberately lying, our two judgements, though they appear to contradict one another, do not, in fact, do so and both can be correct.

2. 'That to speak of a developed moral sense or a sound ethical judgement is meaningless. Since an ethical judgement consists, on this view, in asserting merely that our feelings or opinions in regard to something are so and so, the only sense in which one so-called ethical judgement can be more correct than another is the sense in which A may be a better observer of his own feelings than B.' (Joad, *Philosophy*, p. 122).

Such theories are called 'naturalist' or 'subjectivist' theories and subjectivism is a doctrine that all knowledge is subjective only, and incapable of objective proof. The assumption on which these theories are based is that the natural world, of which our minds, with their emotions, desires and so on, form part, is the only world, and that it is not necessary in explaining ethical experience to postulate any order of reality other than the natural or sentient world. But the point against such view is that if we accept it, the 'good' is only what is thought 'good' and not 'objective or real good'. Further, it becomes impossible to settle any moral-dispute as the emotions and desires of the judgement makers vary and with that varies the result of their judgements only to end in contradictory statements which lead us nowhere. This is why morality has

remained a subject, incomplete and unfinished. The problem is yet to be solved, the questions being: 'What is the objective good?' and 'Is there any definite standard to measure the ethical judgements? We have tried to answer these questions in the light of Islamic morality. As Islam is a religion, perfect and pure, universal and for all time, so is its morality.



# 1

## *Morality*

Islam is the religion of peace, hence Islamic order may be defined as the divinely ordained system of life, for harmonious and peaceful coexistence, where the Unity of God is to express itself in the Unity of Man and the Sovereignty of God to manifest itself in the obedience to His Laws which avoid extremes, ensure social justice, and stand for moral excellence.

Before we proceed with the concept and role of morality, in Islamic order, we deem it necessary to explain what morality is and how it is generally conceived.

Morality or ethics deals with conduct, in so far as this is considered as right or wrong, good or bad. According to Dewey, the terms 'ethics' and 'ethical', are derived from a Greek word 'ethos' which originally meant customs, usages, especially those belonging to some group as distinguished from another, and later came to mean disposition, character. They are thus like the Latin word 'moral', from mores..

It was in customs, says Dewey, that the moral or ethical made its appearance, for customs were not

merely habitual ways of acting; they were ways approved by the group or society. To act contrary to the customs of the group brought severe disapproval. The customs, therefore, were strictly observed which gave birth to Customary morality.

It was mainly due to their expediency that customs had the force of law and were considered as good. Being the approved standards of morality, their violation brought the censure of the whole society. But there are periods in history when a whole community or a group finds itself dissatisfied with its old customs, for they fail to adequately meet the new issues and problems of life, and this is the starting point of Reflective morality, which supplants the Customary morality.

Reflective morality is much advanced and progressive in that the individual is not satisfied any longer to take the group's valuation. He wants some rational method of setting up standards of values, emphasizing at the same time individual development rather than habitual response to the group needs. Thus individuality raises its head and with it the tendencies towards self-assertion, self-interest. This being anti-social, need was felt for moral theories which emerge when men are confronted with difficult situations. Moral theory, as such, is an attempt to tackle the problem through speculation. Philosophers are the thinking minds who try to prescribe a right course of action in particular circumstances but they differ from each other according to their own lines of thought. This gives rise to various and conflicting moral theories.

Morality is generally considered as a code or set

of principles by which men live. Its theoretical study concerns itself with such questions as 'what is the good life' and 'how ought men to behave' and so on. There are many theories formulated to answer these questions but we confine our attention to the study of Classical theories of the first rank and authority.

## 2

### *Classical Theories*

#### **(a) Plato: Evil is due to lack of knowledge**

In most of the classical theories it is assumed that if we know what the good life is we will naturally behave in such a way as to try to achieve it.

Platonism, for instance, holds that evil is due to lack of knowledge; if a man discovers what is right he will never act wickedly. But the problem is how to discover 'the right' or 'the good' and how can this be done when men hold different and conflicting opinions about the good life?

In answer to this Plato says that the discovery of the nature of things is an intellectual task, hence to discover 'what the good life is' one must be trained in various disciplines such as mathematics, philosophy and so on. It is only through such intellectual training that men would have the capacity to know the nature of the good life. Even without this sort of training it is possible for some men to lead good life but they will do so haphazardly or blindly. There may be some men who do not have intellectual power to apprehend what the 'good life' is, but they will act virtuously if

they follow those who have knowledge of 'the good'. This finds expression in Plato's famous work '*The Republic*', which speaks of Philosopher King as the most efficient ruler, for he is possessed of knowledge of 'the good' and can lead men to 'the good life'.

According to Plato, there is fundamentally one and only one good life for all men to lead because goodness is something which is not dependent upon man's inclinations, desires or wishes but is absolute as it exists independently of men and remains to be discovered if men can be properly trained. Such is the absolutism in Plato's philosophy.

From the above it is evident that Plato regards morality as being a matter of knowledge but only a few are intellectually gifted to have such ability. It is not sufficient to say that those of us who have not the ability can live good lives by being led by those who have, since to behave morally presupposes that one has responsibility for one's actions and an action is not truly moral or immoral unless it is the result of free choice of the individual performing it. Aristotle seems aware of these defects in Plato's theory, since he adopts his own doctrine of morality.

#### **(b) Aristotle: The Doctrine of the Golden Mean**

Aristotle, though a great metaphysician, but, curiously enough, in his ethical writings he adopts a scientific or empirical approach to ethical problems. Instead of trying to discover the nature of the good life for all men by reflection alone, he examined the behaviour of various people in every day life. He noticed that the various lives that men of common sense consider

to be 'good' all contain one common characteristic, *i.e.*, happiness. Hence he frankly admits that the aim of life is not goodness for its own sake, but happiness.

His doctrine of Golden Mean is explained as follows:

Being happy, according to Aristotle, is like being well-fed. How much food should a man eat in order to be well-fed? To Aristotle, there is no general answer to this question in the sense of specific amount. It depends on the size of the man, what sort of work he does, whether he is ill or well, and so on. The proper amount for anyone to eat can be ascertained by trial and error: if we eat a certain amount of food and still feel hungry, we should eat more; if we eat the same amount and feel uncomfortable, then we should eat less. The correct amount is a 'mean' between eating too much and too little.

But the 'mean' cannot be interpreted as being synonymous with 'average'. Suppose that one pound of food per day is too little, and that two pounds is too much. Does this suggest that the average amount (*i.e.*, one pound and a half) is the correct amount? Aristotle's answer is that it may or may not be—but in general, one cannot say that the correct amount is exactly one pound and a half; all one can say is that it is an amount somewhere between one pound and two pounds; and this is what Aristotle intends by the word 'mean'. Further, it will be seen from the above that Aristotle's mean varies from man to man.

The golden mean, however, is not, like the mathematical mean, an exact average of two precisely cal-

culable extremes; it fluctuates with the collateral circumstances of each situation and is subject to flexible reason.

The theory of Aristotle is subject to some criticism as in certain situations it is difficult to follow the mean. For example, there is no 'mean' between keeping a promise and not keeping one. The same applies to telling the truth: either one does or does not tell the truth. But we have to bear in mind that the question of 'mean' arises only when there is the possibility of going to extremes.

### (c) **Hedonism**

To Plato, the good life is in no way connected with pleasure, but Aristotle moderated this doctrine in holding that 'pleasure must be in some way an ingredient of happiness'. Epicurus disagreed with both of them and held a view which is called 'Hedonism', the doctrine that pleasure is the sole good. To him, morality is identical with expedience.

The ethical philosophy of Epicurus consists mainly of advice for living moderately but pleasantly. While discovering pleasure to be good he also realized that if a person pursues pleasure too arduously, pain will follow. For example, if a man drinks too much, it will result in headache. Since some pleasures are obviously followed by pain, Epicurus distinguished between those pleasures which are followed by pain and those which are not and regarded only the latter as good. He called the former 'dynamic' pleasures and the latter as 'passive' pleasures. Sexual love, for example, is bad because it is accompanied by fatigue,

remorse and depression. He advocated avoidance of such pleasures as are bad, for he believed that it is better to avoid pain than to seek pleasure if it will produce pain.

Hedonism, though theoretically attractive, may be seen to violate our ordinary feelings about what constitutes behaviour. The objection is not that it seeks superficial and narrow pleasures but, more fundamentally, that pleasure is not the sole object which men should strive for.

#### (d) **Cynicism**

It is the philosophy of the Cynics, founded by Antisthenes, a pupil of Socrates, who condemned ease, wealth, and enjoyment of life. The most famous was Diogenes who carried principles to an extreme. This is the philosophy which holds that if salvation is to be found it is to be found in a rejection of society and in a return to simple life—to a life of asceticism.

The word 'Cynic' comes from the Greek word 'Kynos', which means 'dog-like'. Diogenes, for example, is supposed to have lived in a large tub, and rejected all refinements—of dress, food, personal cleanliness. The Cynics believed that the world was fundamentally evil; in order to live properly a man must withdraw from participation in it. Cynicism is not only anti-social, but also contributed largely to undermine the social standards, contending that only individual virtue was of essential importance.

As a philosophy Cynicism has had a great influence upon plain man and is considered to have been a major factor in the development of early Christian



philosophy. The monk is no better than a Cynic for he casts aside the world and lives the life of a cave or monastery, while monasticism is not permissible in Islam.

### ~~(4) Stoicism~~

Stoicism has been the most influential ethical doctrine of the ancient Western World before Christianity. Zeno was the founder of Stoicism and is supposed to have lectured in the third century B.C. from a porch, and stoicism gets its name from this fact, since 'stoa' is the Greek word for 'porch'. The basic tenet of stoicism for achieving personal salvation is just like that of the Cynics and can be summed up in one sentence: Learn to be indifferent to external influences! It is a philosophy of indifference. By practising indifference one becomes independent of the world.

The Stoics believed in predestination, i.e. that all happenings in the world are fixed by God according to some preconceived plan, and that virtue consists in a will which is in agreement with the happenings of nature. Further, they considered it important to free oneself from desires and passions.

Stoicism differs from Cynicism in that the Cynics felt that they were powerless to prevent the collapse of the world in which they lived and hence they renounced it, while the Stoics argued that this sort of renunciation was unnecessary, for man need not renounce the material things of the world provided that he does not become involved in them. If he remains indifferent to them and unaffected by them there is no reason why he should not continue to enjoy them.

The Stoics hold that man is not free but instead is chained to his destinies in accordance with the divine plan. But this view is inconsistent with their view that a man can alter his character and can change his frame of mind in such a manner that he will become indifferent to things that he formerly prized. If man is free and has power to alter his character and to change his frame of mind, then the thesis that all events are predetermined by some master plan must be false.

The problem of Freedom of the Will is the most baffling one. It has not only appeared in Stoic philosophy but also occurs in religious philosophy as well as in modern psychology. Islam is the religion which has found a clue to its solution as will be explained later.

### **(f) Spinoza: The Ethics**

Spinoza is reckoned as one of the towering figures in the history of Ethics. He was a rigid determinist as he says, 'All things come to pass, come to pass according to the eternal order and fixed laws of Nature'. Thus he was in the metaphysical tradition of the Stoics. In holding that nothing is good or bad in itself, but is only so in relation to someone, Spinoza is a relativist. From this point of view of Spinoza riches, fame and sensual pleasure are all not inherently worthwhile. They are not worth acquiring for their own sake but only as means to making human life more happy. When these things affect men in desirable ways, they are good, but when they affect them in undesirable ways, they are bad.

According to him good life consists in the recognition of the truth that all events are determined and a man will be happy when he comes to understand that there are limits to human power and that everything which happens must happen necessarily. This sort of attitude, says he, if developed, will liberate men from fear, anxiety and unhappiness. These arise only when a man becomes slave to his emotions.

Spinoza's masterpiece is *The Ethics* which is considered to be his great work by many philosophers but he did not effectively resolve the conflict that exists between determinism and freedom. He believed that all events in nature are determined which means that man is essentially powerless. The question is: 'how can he change his attitude and frame of mind towards life and be free from anxieties when he is powerless?'

### **(g) Bentham and Stuart Mill: Utilitarianism**

One of the earliest exponents of this moral theory was Francis Hutcheson but the most famous exponents of it are Jermy Bentham and John Stuart Mill who attempted to lay down a principle for determining the rightness or wrongness of an act and called this maxim the Principle of Utility. According to this principle an action is right in so far it tends to produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number and happiness is taken to mean pleasure. The fundamental point is that it is consequences of a given action which determine its rightness or wrongness, not the motive from which it is done. The object is to separate the rightness or wrongness of an action from the goodness or badness of the person who performs the action.

There are certain objections raised against Utilitarianism and Nietzsche describes Mill as a 'block head' for his assumption that in computing the amount of happiness or unhappiness, which an action creates, each man will count equally for one unit of happiness. Nietzsche believed that some people were inherently more important than others and their happiness or unhappiness counted for more than the happiness or unhappiness of the average man. Carlyle, on the other hand, condemned Utilitarianism as 'a universal syllabus of sentimental twaddle'.

Further, there are some philosophers who rejected Utilitarianism on the ground that consideration in assessing the moral worth of our action must be given to the motive from which it is done.

#### (h) Kantian Moral Philosophy

According to Kant ethics is the most important subject in philosophy. He believes in the moral basis of religion. He even used ethical arguments to establish the existence of God. Since men who are not virtuous are happier in this world there must be another world for virtuous men to be rewarded and this leads him to the conclusion that there is God and an eternal life.

'What is the nature of morality' is the main question which Kant's moral theory was formulated to answer. Kant believed that the key to answer this question lay in distinguishing between acts done from 'inclination' and acts done from a 'sense of duty or obligation'. An obligation is that which a man ought to do despite his inclinations to do otherwise.

Some philosophers have held that in matters of morality one should act upon his inclinations but Kant rejects such an account of morality. For him, a man is acting morally only when he suppresses his inclinations and obeys the command of duty. Further, he makes a distinction between actions which are 'in accord with duty' and those done 'from duty'. The former are not moral acts but the latter are. Most parents, for instance, are inclined to take care of their children because they are fond of them but this does not amount to moral act as it is 'in accordance with duty' and not 'from duty'. A man who understands the nature of his duty and acts upon it is moral and not otherwise. According to him 'the concept of good and evil must not be determined before the law, but only after it and by means of it'. Thus he subordinates good to moral law. Briefly, a moral action is that which is done from 'a respect for duty' and a moral person is he who acts 'from duty', not from inclination or even in accord with duty.

Kant differs sharply from the Utilitarians in that he stresses the point that the essence of morality is to be found in the motive from which an act is done. A man who keeps promises by accident is not a moral man. Every action, says he, must be judged in the light of how it would appear if it were to be a universal code of behaviour. All that is required is to know our duty in a particular case and ask ourselves if the motive of that act can be made universal without falling into self-contradiction. For example, says he, 'May I when in distress, make a promise with intention not to keep it?'

Evidently, this principle, if made universal, simply contradicts itself, for with such a promise there would be no such thing as a promise. No one would like to be content with a false or deceitful promise. The principle of right action, in this light, may be summed up as: 'Act in a way that you would like to be paid back in your own coin' or 'Act as if the maxim of thy action were to become by thy will a universal law of nature'. This is according to Kant, the unconditional command of our conscience—a categorical imperative. Another categorical imperative formulated by Kant is: 'So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of another, in every case as an end, never as a means only.' Another way of putting such maxim is 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.' We should treat others as ends in themselves because that is how we regard ourselves. To treat another man only as a means to achieve our end is to disregard his humanity, hence immoral.

It is said that Kant's theory is inconsistent in that he has not held to his original claim 'that he is concerned solely with motive and not consequences'. The objection is on the basis that Kant introduces consequences of the act in tacitly showing that the effect of not behaving in accordance with the categorical imperative would be to make human life impossible.

## *Analysis and Assessment*

On analysis we find that ethics is not a finished and complete subject. Socrates has rightly remarked: 'No system of ethics could be constructed until full attention had been devoted to the special features of moral experience and to the vagueness and contradictions of ordinary moral opinions. This required the philosophical intellect of the first rank concentrated on the problems of conduct' (*Ency. Britannica*, vol. 10, p. 762).

He went about showing that those who claimed to teach men how to live, poets, orators, and sophists were unable to define their views by argument or even to give adequate definitions of what they were claiming to explain. They were both inconsistent and ignorant. The problem is, therefore, to find what is absolute or objective good.

Nietzsche adopts an attitude of moral relativism. To him, that only is good which leads to enhancement of the will to power, and because in different times and climes it is possible to achieve this result with the help of different moral devices, he did not see any

point in prescribing a universal code of morals. He insisted on the inversion of values because he saw in the prevailing Christian values nothing but nihilism and decadence. . . Morality, he says, has been only a weapon in the hands of those who had the will to gain power, hence various systems to suit the various ends. He who is strong and powerful is on the right side, and who is weak is destined to be reckoned as false.

The classical ethical theories are characterised by their efforts to answer two questions: 'What is the good life?' and 'How ought men to behave?' Moral theories like Hedonism, Cynicism, Stoicism, Utilitarianism and so on seem to be of highest complex nature. We find ourselves constrained to support G. E. Moore who claimed, in his *Principia Ethica*, that the classical theories were attempts to deduce moral precepts from theological, metaphysical or scientific premises and that such arguments are fallacious, since one cannot argue from premises of one logical type (*i.e.*, descriptions) to conclusions of a different logical type (*i.e.*, prescriptions).

Moral theories which appear plausible at a first glance, such as Hedonism, are found upon careful examination to suffer from serious defects. How can the good life be identical with a life of pleasure, since there are pleasures which are bad? For example, pleasures such as drinking alcohol, give us momentary pleasure but may result in a life of subsequent pain and travail.

The various answers which classical theories give are in the form of advice rather than an effort to



define moral words like 'good', 'bad' and so on. Hedonism, for instance, may be regarded as advising men that good life consists of pleasure, and further that they ought to act so as to acquire pleasure. But the word 'good' is not defined and, indeed, 'good' like all moral words, is indefinable and that 'goodness' is an unanalysable property. Any attempted definitions of moral words will be in terms only of their descriptive meaning and no more.

Good and evil are, thus, described in terms of pleasure and pain. So far as 'Utilitarian Ethics' is concerned it assumes that man is motivated by the desire to secure pleasurable and avoid painful experiences. The Utilitarians have their own suspicions of reason and look to human observation and experience in order to find what men actually value. Instead of judging the conduct by the feelings and motives, they would judge it by its consequences. 'Each individual', they held, 'is really seeking his happiness above everything else. If then we are to find a moral standard in what men actually value, we must find it not in the heavens alone but in human happiness'. (Dewey, *Ethic*, p. 167).

The essence of Bentham's philosophy is that 'nature has placed man under the empire of pleasure and pain. We owe to them all our ideas; we refer to them all our judgements, and all the determinations of our life. He who pretends to withdraw himself from this subjection knows not what he says. His only object is to seek pleasure and shun pain.... These eternal and irresistible sentiments ought to be the great study of the moralist and the legislator. The principle of

utility subjects everything to these two motives' (Bentham, *The Theory of Legislation*, p. 2).

Bentham's theory is criticized as contradictory in itself. According to its conception of desire and motive, the whole object of all actions is the obtaining of personal pleasure, while the proper standard for judging the morality of act is its contribution to the welfare of others. In Bentham's theory 'desire for private pleasure as the sole motive of action and universal benevolence as the principle of approval are at war with each other'.

'It would be only a poor sort of happiness' remarked George Eliot in her *Romola*, 'that could ever come by caring very much for our narrow pleasures'. Personal pleasure is indeed a low sort of pleasure and 'it is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied'.

Further, pleasure has no sound basis, for it depends mostly upon the existing state of a person:

'What is agreeable at one time, disagrees at another; what pleases in health is distasteful in illness; what annoys or disgusts in a state of repletion is gratifying when one is hungry and eager. And on a higher scale, that which is pleasant to men of generous disposition arouses aversion in a mean and stingy person; what is pleasant to a child may bore an adult; the objects that gratify a scholar are repulsive to a boor'

(Dewey, *Ethics*, p. 213).

In fact, there can be no standard of judgement as to know what exactly constitutes pleasure and, morally speaking, pleasure as an end cannot be considered

'good', for a villain takes pleasure in his wickedness. The Utilitarian theory, that pleasure is the good and the end, is baseless and immoral.

It may have been clear by now that Morality cannot be adequately defined and Ethics fails to be a science. But the subjectivists, for instance, Hedonists contend that their moral judgements are not false but true. Moral theories, in this respect, are classified into subjectivistic and objectivistic. This raises the question of defining subjectivism and objectivism.

### **(a) Subjectivism**

Subjectivism is the doctrine that all knowledge is subjective only and incapable of objective proof. It is commonly held that there is no reality other than the reality of things which we see, touch, hear, smell or taste. This leads to deny the existence of an order of reality which is not open to the investigation and subject to the laws of science and equally denies, with regard to human conduct, that there is anything real in the psychological realm other than the series of emotions, desires, impulses, hopes and thoughts which make up the stream of our consciousness. Hence a thing is good not because it is characterized by goodness or is really good but because we desire it and it gives us happiness.

Suppose if someone denies this sort of conclusion as ascetics are said to have done, maintaining that we should mortify the flesh here for the happiness to be attained in the Hereafter, what will be the reply? Further, if we ask a subjectivist, 'How do you know that pleasure is a good?' He has no reasoned answer,

he just sees to be so. Finally, as we have already explained pleasure has no definite meaning.

The argument which is advanced in support of subjectivism may be called the argument from Sentience. The subjectivists argue that no question of good or bad can arise in a world which has no sentient being—beings that are capable of feeling, for it would not make sense to say that anything good or bad could happen to inanimate objects such as a rock or stone. It is only if some sentient being is affected by these events, or could be affected by them, that it makes sense to say that they are good or bad. Goodness and badness thus seem to depend upon the feelings, attitudes and desires of sentient beings. From considerations such as these it is argued that some form of subjectivism must be true.

But if we probe deep into such argument it becomes evident that what it proves is not the good or bad as it actually is but as it is thought or felt. Moral judgements of this type cannot be called sound ethical judgements since they depend not only upon emotions, desires, and feelings of persons making such judgements but also on their ethical, traditional, social, economic and other sentiments. It is on this account that these judgements not only differ from one another but are also conflicting so much so that even vices and crimes are considered virtues. Says Canon Rashdall, a well-known authority on ethical philosophy:

‘There is hardly a vice or crime (according to our own moral standard) which has not at some time or other in some circumstances been looked upon as a moral and religious duty. Stealing was

accounted virtuous for the young Spartan and among the Indian caste of Thugs. In the ancient world Piracy, *i.e.* robbery and murder, was a respectable profession. To the Mēdiæval Christian religious persecution was the highest of duties, and so on' (C. E. M. Joad, *Philosophy*, p. 31).

Under the circumstances it may be said that just as science is content with a world of matter in motion, the subjectivist ethics is content with a world of human consciousness which consists of nothing except the stream of emotions, desires, impulses, hopes and thoughts. The peculiarity of the subjectivist theories of ethics is that they do not accept the view that there is an 'object' which possesses ethical qualities of its own, with the corollary that there can be correct ethical judgement.

For a better understanding of subjectivist theories let us call a person making an ethical judgement 'the subject' and the character to which the judgement refers 'the object'. The ethical judgements are called subjectivistic as they do not refer to the object which they support but to the subject, being judgements to the effect that the subject is experiencing certain feelings. The good according to such theories is not the good in its own right but according as is experienced by the subject, *i.e.*, the maker of ethical judgement. It, therefore, follows that if such theories are considered to be correct then 'good' has no ethical quality of its own, for, the good, in such a case, is only what is thought 'good'. Let us turn to objectivism and see whether its ethical judgements are correct.

**(b) Objectivism**

Objective means actually existing, not subjective only. Hence objectivism is the tendency to lay stress upon what is objective or external to the mind.

The main argument in favour of objectivism is that it provides a theory which corresponds more closely to the views of men of common sense about moral matters than subjectivism. To mark the difference between subjectivism and objectivism we cite an example of 'two persons who have just entered a room and asked to guess its temperature; the one is supposed to have recently emerged from a refrigerator, the other from a hot-house; the former guesses 75°F., the latter 70°F. It is clear that two subjective conditions prevailing in the bodies of the two judges have determined the guesses that they make as to the temperature of the room; what they do not determine is the temperature of the room. What both judges are purporting to assess is a certain condition which prevails in the world independently of their judgements, and most of us would agree that, since the temperature of the room can be measured by a thermometer, there is a perfectly definite sense in holding that judgement according to thermometer is objective and correct, while another judgement to the effect that it is something else is wrong and incorrect' (C. E. M. Joad, *Philosophy*, pp. 133, 134).

The difference between the case in which we judge about the temperature and the case in which we judge about ethical qualities is that in the former we can refer to an instrument, the thermometer, by reference to which we can determine what the objective temper-

ature is and pronounce our judgement to be nearer to the truth than the other, whereasthere is no equivalent instrument wherewith to measure ethical judgements. Here is the difficulty and it is perhaps for this reason that the subjectivists contend that all knowledge is subjective and incapable of objective proof. Let us turn to Kant and see if his moral theory can solve this problem.

In his analysis of human impulses and desires Kant goes all the way with subjectivists that man is merely a creature of likes and dislikes, of wants and needs, of impulses and tastes, of preferences and prejudices, but, he says, there is one characteristic unique in nature, and man being possessed of it, cannot be adequately regarded as wholly a child of nature. In addition to the impulses and desires which tell him what he would like to do, he is, on occasion, conscious of something else, namely, what he ought to do which may be very opposite to what he would like to do. Thus, for man there is a distinction between 'want' and 'ought', between 'desire' and 'duty'; moral sense is innate in him and not derived from experience. Moral sense, says Kant, is our unescapable feeling in the face of our temptation that this or that is wrong. An act is good not because it has good results or because it is aright, but because it is done in obedience to the inner sense of duty. Morality is not properly the doctrine how we make ourselves happy but how we make ourselves worthy of happiness.

To comprehend the unique significance of 'ought' Kant insists that man must be a member of some other order of reality. Thus, he can win free from the

influences of heredity, circumstances and environment which otherwise determine his psychology. To see Kant's moral philosophy in its proper setting we have to study it in its association with his metaphysical theory.

Kant says that when we will to do our duty in pursuance of 'ought' and in the face of disinclination, we are making direct contact not with the familiar world which appears to our senses, but with the world as it is independently of ourselves—a moral world and an order of reality which contains the value of morality such as right and good. It is not with our minds and our intellects that we recognize what is right and realize what ought to be done, but by the 'practical' as opposed to the 'theoretical' reason—a faculty similar, in modern concept, to intuition. The central fact of morals appeared to him to be the voice of duty from within the soul itself.

Thus the familiar world of common sense is not the only world, there is another world and order of reality which is spiritual and which contains values of morality. This implies the existence of a mind, other than our own, which not only knows but also creates values—a Law-giver who lays down the moral law or order of the universe. The argument, in this way, passes over from ethics to religion.

With God as the Law-giver the problem is solved. He alone knows the objective good and we cannot know it as we often dislike a thing which is good for us and like a thing which is bad for us: 'Perchance you dislike a thing which may be good for you ; and perchance you like a thing which may be bad for you' (2: 216). To know the objective good is beyond our



power and it is in His law alone that we find the required instrument and standard for correct ethical judgements. 'Good', here is not what is thought 'good' but the 'objective and absolute good'. The question is now, 'What is the good life, in its real sense, and how ought men to behave?'

# 4

## *Good Life*

Since the objective good is known to God alone, the good life is that which is lived in accordance with the law of God and men ought to behave in the manner which pleases God and what pleases God most are the righteous deeds. We are given a beautiful description of righteousness:

“It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards East or West ; but it is righteousness—to believe in God and the last Day, and the Angels and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and practise regular charity; to fulfil contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic, such are the people of truth, the righteous’. (2 : 177).

The emphasis laid upon this verse is so great that most of the Quran seems to be nothing else than the exposition of its implications. Among the duties

enumerated in this verse, the first and foremost is to believe in the Unity of God. This is the basic concept into which the Quran desires to initiate human mind. The late Rev. C. F. Andrews has said :

“One of the greatest blessings which Islam has brought to East and West alike has been the emphasis which at a critical period in human history it placed upon the Divine Unity. For during those Dark Ages both in East and West, from 600 to 1000 A.D. this doctrine was in danger of being overlaid and obscured in Hinduism and Christianity itself, owing to the immense accretions of subsidiary worships of countless demi-gods and heroes. Islam has been, both to Europe and India, in their dark hour of aberration from the sovereign truth of God’s Unity, an invaluable corrective and deterrent. Indeed, without the final emphasis on this truth, which Islam gave from its central position,—facing India and facing Europe—it is doubtful whether this idea of God as one could have obtained that established place in human thought which is uncontested in the intellectual world today” (*The Genuine Islam*, Singapore, Vpl. 1, No. 8, 1936).

Unity of God is to express itself in the Unity of man. The enforcement of the sense of Unity and brotherhood has been the chief aim of Islam. Every one who embraces Islam, enters into its fold and is treated as a brother, since believers are but one brotherhood (49 : 10). Suffice it to quote from the Prophet who says :

“A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim, he

neither wrongs him, nor leaves him helpless, nor humiliates him" (Muslim).

"It is forbidden for a Muslim to take the life, honour and property of another Muslim" (Muslim and Bukhari).

"In mutual compassion, love and kindness, you will find the faithful like a body, if one of its parts feels pain, the whole body responds with wakefulness and fever" (Muslim and Bukhari).

Believe and work righteously' are the injunctions to be strictly observed. These are the words that reverberate and echo in the Quran. The Quran expects man who believes in God to express that belief in an earnest endeavour to promote the unity of man, it is by action that he has to prove his belief in God, even as the Prophet said:

"God doth not accept faith if it is not expressed in action, and doth not accept action if it does not conform to faith" (Bukhari).

Next to belief in God is the importance attached to the deeds of charity. So mindful is the Quran of the economically depressed classes of society that it calls upon every earning member to assign, in his earnings, a share to the needy and the poor: "And in their wealth is a share of the needy and deprived" (51: 19). The supreme note in regard to social security is struck in the verse (3 : 92). It runs:

"Ye shall never attain righteousness unless ye give (the needy and poor) of that which ye love (particularly your wealth); and whatever ye give of a truth God knoweth it well."

Charity is not to give something worthless but it

is to give what we love and value greatly. Faith is not merely a matter of words, we must be prepared to show it in deeds of charity to our fellow-men. Practical deeds of charity are of value when they proceed from love, and from no other motive. In this respect our duties take various forms in the gradation as arranged in the above cited verse (2 : 177). The importance attached to these duties is manifest from the fact that their mention precedes that of the duties to God such as Salat (Prayers) which is one of the five pillars of Islam. These are the pillars devised to purify the soul of man and build his character in such a manner that he takes pleasure in self-sacrifice—the essence of righteousness.

The above verse is remarkable in that it renders the individual conscious of his duties on which depends the welfare of society and also teaches him to be firm and patient in pain (or sufferings) and adversity and throughout all periods of panic. The virtues of firmness and patience help man preserve his dignity and enable him to bear with fortitude all that falls to his lot of the vicissitudes of life.

The Arabic word 'Sabar', which occurs in this verse, is translated as patience but it implies many shades of meaning which is impossible to comprehend in one English word. In addition to its meaning of not being hasty, the word 'Sabar' connotes perseverance, constancy, steadfastness, firmness of purpose, self-restraint, endurance of sorrow, pain, and other evils. But it is never used in the sense of despair and disappointment for Islam is not passivity but active striving with the hope for the better. 'Sabar', thus, means patient

perseverance and firmness of purpose which bear good fruits. In proof of the importance of this word it is enough to say that it has appeared in the Quran on more than ninety occasions and the Caliph Umar is reported to have stated that he had found the best way of life in patience, for patience is the key to success.

Here, it may be said that there is no peculiarity about Islam, for all the revealed religions profess the same truth. But their teachings are not in the original form. Further, they cannot claim to be the religions of universal character. Islam is the only religion, universal and for all time, for the Prophet Muhammad was sent as a Universal Messenger to mankind (34 : 28), and the Quran is the Book preserved in the original purity. Being universal in character Islam is neither Judaism which has the concept of a particular covenant or a specially chosen people, nor is it Christianity whose mission, as Jesus made it clear, was confined to recovering the 'lost sheep of Israel'. Further, the Christian view of the 'Kingdom of God in heaven and Kingdom of Caesar on earth' has no place in Islam.

### **Says Kerr**

'In professing to provide man with a political and legal system as well as a spiritual faith, Islam denies, at the outset, the conception familiar to Christendom of a separation between temporal and spiritual matters' (*Islamic Reform*, p. 3).

### **Observes Hitti**

'Moses was a prophet, so were Abraham, Noah,

Christ and others, each with a dispensation appropriate for a certain time or place. But Muhammad's dispensation sums up as well as supersedes all earlier ones. It is final. After it there is none' (*The Near East in History*, p. 197).

Being the last of the Prophets, the message delivered by Muhammad is final and for all time and the law contained in the Quran is perfect and comprehensive. Good life is, therefore, to live in conformity with such a law.

# 5

## *Islamic Law*

Islamic law is the Command of God revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. It precedes the state and is not preceded by it; it controls the society and is not controlled by it; state and society both have ideally to conform to its dictates. . Observes Jackson:

“Islamic law finds its chief source in the will of Allah revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. It contemplates one community of the faithful, though they may be of various tribes and in widely separated locations. Religion, not nationalism or geography, is the proper cohesive force. The state itself is subordinate to the Quran, which leaves little room for additional legislation, none for criticism or dissent. This world is viewed as but the vestibule to another and a better one for the faithful, and the Quran lays down rules of behaviour toward others and towards society to assure a safe transition. It is not possible to separate political or juristic theories from the teachings of the Prophet, which establish rules of conduct concerning religious, domestic, social and political life.



This results in a law of duties rather than of rights, of moral obligations bindings on the individual, from which no earthly authority can relieve him, and which he disobeys at peril of his future life" (Jackson, Foreword to *Law in the Middle East*, pp. vi, vii).

The doctrine of the Umma or one Community of the Faithful lies at the root of Islamic political concept. The Umma consists of the totality (jama'a) of individuals bound to one another by ties, not of kinship or race, but of religion, in that all its members profess their belief in the One God, and in all their relations to Him, all are equal, without distinction of rank, class or race. Differences of function are recognised, but 'the noblest among you is the most god-fearing' (49: 13). See Gibb, 'Constitutional Organisation' in *Law in the Middle East*, p. 3.

According to Plato, law belongs to the class of convention; it rises through use and wont, while Islamic law is based upon Divine Revelations. Being Divine in origin, Islamic law is distinct from human law which is the product of reason and outcome of customary rules which can never, with perfectness, produce uniformity of conduct within the field of action to which they apply as do the Divine laws with their specified norms of good and bad, virtue and vice.

Divine laws are the standards of right conduct and provide guidance not only in establishing a well ordered society, but also in distinguishing between 'good' and 'evil'. As a well-knit system of obligations, they safeguard the rights of all and as a product of Divine Wisdom which alone knows what the objective

good is; they ensure the welfare of the entire humanity.

The peculiarity of divine law is that it is eternal and immutable. The basis of life, as conceived by Islam, is spiritual. A society based on such a conception must have eternal and immutable laws, but since it does not lose sight of the material world which is subject to change, the laws contain broad principles that admit of interpretation so as to accommodate the change in life and to provide for the growing needs of society. Over and above is the Rule of Necessity and Need to provide facilities to those who are confronted with hardships.

Divine laws, thus, take in their sweep not only this world, but the world to come : 'Ye prefer the life of this world although the Hereafter is better and more lasting' (87 : 17). Islamic life, as such, is the harmonious blend of the material with the spiritual. Bare spirituality is never preached in Islam as it says 'yes' to life and to the worldly things. God has made all things in nature available for man so that he may harness them to suit his purpose: 'Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth are made of service unto him' (45 : 13).

Divine law is unique in that it has its own permanent standards of justice. Hence justice according to Divine law is much higher than all other systems of justice, be they Greek, Roman or any other human law, for it searches the innermost motives. Justice, as conceived by Islam, is not only to give each his due, but also to return good for ill. What Islam suggests is the objective approach to the problem of justice, to put ourselves in the place of another, to see things from the

standpoint of an impartial observer. Here are some of the Quranic verses to give an idea of impartiality :

‘And when ye judge between people, judge with fairness’ (4:58). ‘O ye who believe! stand fast to justice, and for the sake of God always be truthful in giving evidence, though it be against your own selves or (your) parents or kinsfolk, whether the party be rich or poor: God safeguards the interests of both (parties). Therefore follow not your own inclinations lest you should swerve from justice. If you prevaricate or decline (to speak the truth), then verily God is aware of what you do’ (4:135). ‘O ye who believe! For the sake of God, stand up to uphold justice and let not ill-will towards any people impel you to deviate from justice. Act justly. This indeed is akin to piety. Be mindful of God ; for assuredly, He knoweth all that ye do’ (5 : 9).

Justice in Islam is conceived as a sacred trust, a duty imposed upon man to be discharged in all sincerity. ‘To render justice’, says Sarakhsi, ‘constitutes one of the most noble acts of devotion’ (*Mabsut*, vol. 16, p. 67). According to Kasani, ‘it is one of the best acts of devotion and one of the most important duties after belief in God’ (*Badai al-Sanai*, vol. 7, p. 4). Says the Caliph Abu Baker :

‘By God, to me the powerful among you will be weak, and the weak among you powerful until I have taken for them their right’ (Abu Ubayd, *Kitab al-Amwal*, p. 8).

The Caliph Umar is reported to have said :

‘No one will be allowed by me to treat others

unjustly or to encroach upon their rights. Should anyone do so I will punish him severely so that he returns to others their 'rights' (Abu Yusuf, *Kitab al-Kharaj*, p. 167).

The above sayings are in obedience to the Command of God which lays a preponderant stress on moral values :

‘Verily, God enjoineth fairness of dealings and kindly behaviour (with others), and the giving to kindred (out of what you have) ; and forbiddeth lewdness and wrong-doing and oppression’ (16 : 90). ‘And do not touch the property of the orphan except to replace it with something better until he comes of age; give measured weight with (full) justice;—no burden do We place on any soul but that which it can bear;—whenever ye speak, speak justly, even if a nearer relative is concerned; and fulfil the covenant of God: Thus doth He command you, that ye may remember’ (6 : 152).

Such is the morality and law of Islam. For details we refer the reader to our work *Philosophy of Islamic Law and the Orientalists*, Islamic Publications, Lahore (Pakistan).

# 6

## *Concept of Morality in Islam*

Mankind, according to the Prophet, are a fold, every member of which is a shepherd or-keeper unto every other, and accountable for the welfare of the entire fold (Bukhari). Further, mankind are the creatures of God, and most beloved of them before Him is he who is the best to His creatures (Baihaqi). These and other sayings of the Prophet stress the point that one has to identify his interests with the interests of others. The duties to one's self and the duties to others are here placed side by side as the component parts of one's responsibility in life. Only when the individual has a developed sense of such responsibility that he is a moral being and of greater service to society.

Duties are generally expressed in terms of duties to God and duties to society, but the spirit underlying duties to God is the spiritual development of one's self so as to be mindful of duties to others—a harmonious interaction between the sense of God and the sense of fellow-men resulting in righteousness. Such is the concept of morality in Islam and, therefore, Islamic law is the law of duties rather than of rights.

Generally, rights have corresponding duties but in Islamic law duties are more than rights. This has its own advantages.

Right is a claim on someone and duty is a responsibility to someone. The emphasis merely on rights gives rise to the sense of one's own power and authority over others which may be injurious to peace, while emphasis on duties creates harmony in social life and is conducive to peace. A generalized sense of duty is a sense of being bound by that which is right because of its rightfulness. Conformity to the letter of the law, then takes the place of faithfulness to its spirit, *i.e.*, its usefulness in calling attention to the welfare of not only one's self but also of others. The sense of duty, thus, reminds us of our responsibility towards our fellow-beings. This sensitive is specially needed whenever our desire tends to blind us to everything but itself. There are occasions in life on which, under the influence of strong desire, we are apt to lose control upon ourselves and it is the sense of duty to God and to our fellow-men which keeps us away from evil-doing and directs us to the right path—the path of eternal peace and prosperity. Here we realize the importance of duty and comprehend why Islamic law is the law of duties.

# 7

## *Moral Act*

As described by Aristotle 'moral act is that the doer of the moral deed must have a certain state of mind' in doing it. First, he must know what he is doing; secondly, he must choose it, and choose it itself, and thirdly, the act must be the expression of a formed and stable character. In other words the act must be voluntary; that is, it must manifest a choice, and for full morality at least, the choice must be an expression of the general tenor and set of personality. It must involve awareness of what one is about; a fact which in the concrete signifies that there must be a purpose, an aim, an end in view, something for the sake of which the particular act is done' (Dewey, *Ethics*, p. 176).

A moral act, according to the above description, must be the expression of a formed and stable character. But a character of this nature is rarely to be found. No human being can claim to have an absolutely formed character unless he is especially trained so as to find pleasure in right objects and pain in wrong ends. This requires not only moral education

of an excellent type but also an ideal to be followed. Nowhere can these prerequisites be found except in Islam which provides such education in the form of the Quran and an ideal in the life of the Prophet. The best course therefore is to think of moral act in the light of Divine revelation, for human thought, unaided by such knowledge, cannot discern the true values and standards of conduct. So, an act is good or bad exclusively because God has attributed this quality to it.

‘To the Muslims’, says Anderson, ‘there is an ethical quality in every human action, characterized by *qubh* (ugliness, unsuitability) on the one hand or *husn* (beauty, suitability) on the other. But this ethical quality is not such as can be perceived by human reason; instead, man is completely dependent in this matter on Divine revelation. Thus all human actions are subsumed, according to a widely accepted classification, under five categories: as commanded, recommended, left legally indifferent, reprehended, or else prohibited by Almighty God. And it is only in regard to the middle category (i.e. those things which are left legally indifferent) that there is in theory any scope for human legislation’. (Anderson, *Islamic Law in the Modern World*, p. 3).

A survey of moral theories discloses the fact that the philosophers and thinkers have differed greatly in their opinions as to the morality of an act. There are some like Bentham who judge the goodness of an act by its consequences, others like Kant by its motive, for consequences are often out of control, still others who hol-



an act to be good or bad by its approbation and disapprobation, praise and blame. But viewed critically, consequences do not seem to be enough to justify goodness or badness of an act, for sometimes a bad act ends in good consequences; for example, a man throws his dagger to kill his enemy but it hits his malignant tumour and instead of being killed, he is relieved of his pain. Similarly, approbation and disapprobation cannot be the standards of moral judgement as even the most immoral customs may be praised. Female infanticide, for instance, was considered to be good in pre-Islamic Arabia. Approbation and disapprobation only represent the scheme of moral values which is embodied in the social habits of a particular group. Thus a militant community admires and praises acts of bravery; an industrialized community sets its value on amassing wealth. Hence acts are not esteemed because they are virtuous; rather they are virtuous because they are supported by social approval. The only thing that morally counts may be the motive that inspires the act and from which the act is done. Consequences, as already stated, are often out of control.

According to the Prophet 'a person who has no knowledge of medicine, yet pretends to be a doctor, is responsible for the consequences of his act'. He cannot be excused. The act itself being fraudulent, motive counts for nothing. Acts are good or bad according to the classification as specified above, the importance of motive, in Islam, is due to the fact that it helps in determining the reward or punishment applicable to the act. The act, as it were a thing to be judged by the motive from which it is done, hence the Prophet's

saying: 'Acts are determined by their motives'. For further illustration we cite the example of a person who spends his wealth in charity. The act is, no doubt, good and recommended yet he may not be rewarded or if rewarded, the reward may be less than what it ought to be. This is according to his motive. If his deed of charity proceeds from ostentation and show there may be no reward or the reward may be less than what it ought to be. Acts are thus determined by their motives. Migration, for instance, is a good act and recommended for the believers to save themselves and their religion but according to the Prophet there is difference between a believer who migrates for the sake of a woman and he who migrates for the cause of God. Their acts will be determined by their motives. They will receive reward or punishment according to their motives. This is the peculiarity of Islamic morality. It searches out what is inmost in the heart.

# 8

## *Moral Conduct*

The Quran is the code of moral conduct. Conduct and character are considered to have the same meaning. The word character expresses continuity of action. According to Aristotle 'we are what we repeatedly do'. For Schopenhauer, character is continuity of purpose and attitude. It lies in the will, not in the intellect. A 'good will', says he, is profounder and more reliable than a clear mind. Brilliant qualities of mind win admiration, but never affection; and 'all religions promise a reward for excellences of the will or heart but none for excellences of head or understanding.'

To Dewey, selfhood is expressive of character, 'the self, as it were, reveals its nature in what it chooses'. In consequence, a judgement upon an act is also judgement upon the character. Only that man is good who does good deeds. 'The goodness of goodman', as Aristotle said, 'shines through his deeds.'

In Islam, character lies in *taqwa*. The word *taqwa* is noteworthy for its importance as it forms the standard of judging the greatness of man: 'The most

honoured among you is *atqakum* or the most God-fearing of you' (49 : 13). Says the Prophet: "The Arab is not superior to non-Arab, nor a non-Arab is superior to an Arab; neither the White to the Black nor the Black to the White except on the basis of *taqwa* or fear of God."

To start with, we refer to the Caliph Umar who once asked Ubayy b. Ka'b (a companion of the Prophet and distinguished for his knowledge of the Quran) as to the meaning of *taqwa*, who, in answer, asked Umar whether he had ever passed through prickly shrubs and, if so, how he managed to save himself from the pricks. To this Umar replied that he drew together his robe and held it firm. This very act, said Ubayy, is *taqwa*. Literally the word '*taqwa*' means abstinence from what is harmful but it is generally used to express a life of piety. Ghazali defines it as the 'eschewing of each and every thing that may be detrimental to faith'. In the Quran it is used in various senses, *i.e.* 'to fear God' in the verse: 'Enter houses through the proper door and fear God *ittaqu* (2 : 189); 'to act aright' in the verse: 'God likes those who act aright', '*muttaqin*' (9 : 4); 'to guard against evil' in the verse: 'And had they believed, and guarded themselves from evil', *attaqu*, better would have been the reward from their Lord' (2 : 103); 'right conduct', in the verse: 'And take a provision (with you) for the journey but the best of the provisions is right conduct, *taqwa* (2 : 197); 'piety and righteousness' in the verse: 'By the soul and Him Who balanced it, and endowed it with the talent to distinguish wickedness from piety', *taqwa* (91 : 7,8).

*Taqwa* is also used as opposed to transgression in the verse: 'Help ye one another in righteousness and piety', *taqwa*, and do not help in sin and transgression' (5 : 2). And the Prophet has used it in the sense of 'guarding oneself against doubtful things'. He says: 'What is lawful and unlawful is evident, yet there are some doubtful cases not known to many of the people. He who guarded himself or *taqa* against doubtful things saved his faith and himself from what is unlawful' (Bukhari). On another occasion he has used this word in the sense of righteousness: 'The believer will not be righteous or *muttaqi* unless he refrains from what is unlawful in favour of what is lawful' (Tirmidhi). All this is to stress the point that one should live in strict conformity with the law of God.

Heart, as said the Prophet, is the seat of *taqwa* and this makes it clear that '*taqwa*', in its real sense, is the fear of God which springs from the heart and expresses itself in righteous deeds. The fear of God is not the fear of a coward or of a child but of a man who wishes to avoid harm to himself and to others. And, indeed, it is the fear out of love and reverence for such a One Who has been Most Gracious and Most Merciful. The lover, in this case refrains from all such acts as would displease the object of his love. The fear of God is, therefore, out of love for God, and this is the height of morality and good sense that accords the lover a distinct place as a man of character. Character is, in fact, the mark or peculiarity which distinguishes one from the other. And, in Islam, this is in point of *taqwa*, so character lies in '*taqwa*'.

Islam, therefore, lays great stress upon character building. Here we refer to the pillars of Islam : *Iman*, *Salat*, *Saum*, *Zakat* and *Hajj*. These play a significant part in building the character. *Iman* or Belief in the Unity of God aims at the Unity of Man; *Salat* or Prayer, five times a day, regularly reminds the believer of his duties to God and to his creatures and in its continuity and consistency is a series of acts to form a stable character on piety and righteousness; *Saum* or Fasting, which extends over the whole month of Ramadan in each lunar year, is to teach self-restraint and to make the believer aware of the hardships that the poor and the needy are confronted with and, thus, to awaken in him the feelings of sympathy for them; *Zakat* or Poor-due is a tax collected by the Government for the help of economically depressed classes and for such as are mentioned in the Quranic verse (9 : 60), it is self-sacrifice on the part of the believer and serves to ensure social security; *Hajj* or Pilgrimage is to be performed at least once in the lifetime, by those who can afford the journey to Mecca (the sacred sanctuary of Muslims), its social aspect cannot be exaggerated as it affords the opportunity for the believers to meet together and confer with regard to social welfare of the community. While *Zakat* is to teach self-sacrifice, *Hajj* teaches the etiquette of social life and social behaviour.

These are the pillars of Islam, devised in such a manner that they serve to purify the soul of man, and keep in check his desires. Desire is an emotion that is directed to the possession of some object from which pleasure is expected. Desire is often so personal that its satisfaction leads men to deviate from the right

path. To control such desires has seemed more fundamental than their satisfaction and it is well said that it is better, by far, to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied.

Here the question arises of human nature as to what it is like. While most of the philosophers hold it to be evil, Islam says that it is pure and good, as man is created in the goodliest form (95 : 4). Yet it cannot be denied that man is liable to fall a prey to the temptations, for our senses and appetites are solely concerned with external things such as commit us to situations we cannot control. The solution lies in control, but the question is: 'Can we control ourselves?'

The superiority of Islam lies in this that it has its ways and means to capture and block up the very source of evil. For this purpose it adopts two methods:

1. Moral education, and
2. Purification of soul—a sort of pincers movement.

Moral education, according to Aristotle, is character training which a person receives in a good city, but this is a vague definition and bears no comparison to moral education of Islam which aims at the development of character which avoids evils and takes pleasure in righteous deeds, and which according to Iqbal, awakens in man the higher consciousness of his manifold relations with God and the Universe. The character training received by the believer, under the instructions contained in the Quran, is exemplary as was the character of the Prophet of whom the Quran speaks highly: 'A noble pattern have ye in the Messenger of God' (33 : 21).

The character of the Prophet was that of the Quran itself, as said 'Aisha, his wife. He actually practised what was revealed to him. His message is for all mankind. He exemplified in his deeds the moral and spiritual law and proclaimed that 'he was sent in order to complete the virtues of character' (Waliuddin, al-Tabrizi, *Mishkat*, vol. 2, p. 632). To him 'an accomplished Muslim is he who is best in character'.

While the Quran and the life of the Prophet supply the believer with the best moral education, the Pillars of Islam purify his soul to such an extent that he is transformed into a God-fearing and God-conscious being. He feels the presence of God at every turn and movement in his life and his actions are the result of careful deliberation so that he may not incur the wrath of God. This attitude towards life is a key to self-control and to the success and prosperity of man : 'He succeeds who purifies it (soul), and he fails who corrupts it' (91 : 9, 10). Such is the procedure adopted by Islam to build a character, stable and virtuous in form, for no moral theory can be successful without the virtues of character.

Referring to the moral theory of Kant we have to say that he seems to have drawn upon Islamic teaching and particularly the saying of the Prophet :

'Wish for your brother (i.e. others), what you wish for yourself; he has no faith who wishes not for his brother what he wishes for himself' (Bukhari). This corresponds to Kant's categorical imperative: 'So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person, or in that of any other, in



every case as an end withal, never as a means only'. It is in other words, 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you'. But the Prophet's saying as above, not only precedes the formula of Kant but is much higher in point of morality as the full text of his saying as given by Bukhari in his *Al-Adab al-Mufrad* is : 'He has no faith who wishes not for his brother (i.e. others) what he wishes for himself 'of the good'. The words 'of the good' are remarkable in that they mean that none should wish for the other except what is good, not so in Kantian theory.

From the above it is evident that Kant affirms what Islam established centuries ago but he failed to observe that man's character is the basis of morality. His theory is defunct without the backing of character. Islam, therefore, emphasizes the importance of character and also builds it in the manner specified above, hence the morality preached by Islam is deep rooted and most effective. No moral theory, except that of Islam, is complete and comprehensive.

## *Moderation—the Principle of Islamic Life*

Life, according to Islam, is an indivisible whole. All its areas whether politics or economics, social or religious, sex or others are to be governed and controlled by Divine Law. This leads to social solidarity or an edifice parts of which strengthen each other.

The outstanding feature of Islamic life is that it is free from extremes and justly balanced, for virtue is to avoid the extremes on either side. The message of God is: 'We have moulded you into a society justly balanced that ye might be a pattern unto others, even as the Prophet has been a pattern unto you' (2 : 143); 'You are the best of peoples evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong' (3 : 110).

Islam, thus, steers clear of the extremes in life and chooses for itself the middle path or the principle of moderation. Here it may be said that this is the same as the 'Golden Mean' of Aristotle. But there is a difference between 'the moderation or mean' as a principle and 'the mean' of Aristotle which he put forward as a rule. A rule is not a special order or command, it

fluctuates with the collateral circumstances of each situation and is subject to flexible reason, while a principle is the command, not variable but to be obeyed by all. In Islam it takes the form of law and is law itself. Islamic law, not given to extremes, is no other than the law which adheres to the middle course and moderation in life.

We read in the Quran : 'And be moderate in thy pace' (31 : 19). In all things we have to be moderate, we are not to be so niggardly as to keep back our wealth from the just needs of those who have a right to our help, nor is it becoming to be so lavish as to make ourselves destitute : 'Make not thy hand tied (like a niggard's) to thy neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach so that thou become blameworthy and destitute,' (17 : 29). In our spending it is wise neither to be extravagant nor niggardly but strike a perfectly just balance between these extremes : 'Those who when they spend, are not niggardly, but hold a just (balance) between those extremes' (25 : 67). Nothing in excess is allowed : 'Eat and drink but nothing in excess. Indeed He does not like those who indulge in excesses' (7 : 31). To indulge in excess is to transgress the limits ordained by God. Meticulous observance of law is, therefore, essentially required and this has been well specified by the Prophet who says : 'What is lawful and unlawful is evident, yet there are some doubtful cases not known to many of the people. He who guarded himself against doubtful things saved his faith and himself from what is unlawful' (Bukhari). Thus, to keep the mean is to observe the law strictly and discard what is doubtful. While the mean of Aristotle is fluctuating

and subject to flexible reason and thus doubtful, the mean of Islam is free from doubt, justly balanced and without any excesses.

Islam never preaches self-abnegation, for that is the creed of Cynics, nor does it advocate repression of emotions practised by Stoics but only sets a limit to Hedonistic desires as a deterrent against the evils resulting from excesses, harmonious development of body and soul being the most desirable thing. Squandering and hoarding are both denounced, Usury or unjustifiable enrichment is forbidden, moderation or just mean enjoined.

### **Observes Schacht**

'Islamic law is systematic, that is to say, it represents a coherent body of doctrines. Its several institutions are well put into relations with one another ; the greater part of the law of contracts and obligations, for instance, is construed by analogy with the contract of sale. Furthermore, the whole of the law is permeated by religious and ethical considerations; each institution, transaction or obligation is measured by religious and moral rules, such as the prohibition of interest, the prohibition of uncertainty, the concern for the just mean or average (*mithl*)'. See, Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law*, p. 201.

So far we have dealt with the principle of moderation which is virtue in itself. Now it remains to be seen how far it is true that morality of a people is known by their social system. Let us, then turn to the social system of Islam.

# 10

## *Moral Values and the Islamic Social System*

The word 'social' in its strict sense refers to mutual relations of men in a given society. While dealing with the social system of Islam we have, therefore, to consider the nature of society which is formed according to Divine law for the purpose of harmonious and peaceful coexistence. Islamic society, as such, is the true image of Islam which regulates the relations between man and man on the basis of righteousness. Religion according to the Prophet is 'good human relations'.

Social system, thus, covers the whole range of mutual relations and the goodness of this largely depends upon the law which controls it. The principle of law which ensures good human relations is the saying of the Prophet : 'Do not inflict injury, nor repay one injury with another'. This serves to purge the society of social evils and paves the way for peaceful coexistence. Islam is a universal religion and whoever embraces it becomes a Muslim and integral part of its society. 'In mutual compassion, love and kindness, the believers are like a body, if one of its parts feels pain,

the whole body responds with wakefulness and fever' as said the Prophet. Such is the unity of life, while the control exercised by the law guarantees not only the uniformity of society, but also establishes good human relations. To know the moral value of Islamic social system we may consider it under two broad heads—Economics and Politics.

### **(a) Economics of Islam**

Unlike other economic systems which are the products of human mind, the economic system of Islam is Divine in character and mainly based upon the Quran and the Sunnah or traditions of the Prophet. It is a system to achieve the highest standard of morality expressed under the term 'righteousness.' Islam regulates the needs of society, means of livelihood, and ways of earning and spending, in its own way. It is significant to note that Buddhism hated wealth, while Judasim set, for wealth, a racial basis. It makes a distinction between a Jew and a non-Jew in that it allows usury with a non-Jew and forbids it to a Jew. Christianity holds that 'it is difficult for a rich man to enter the realm of Heavens' and prefers the life of a cave, while Islam prohibits monasticism and lays stress on active life.

The Quran gives man full sanction to harness the forces of Nature, but makes one condition that he should not be unmindful of his brethren-in-want. The economic system of Islam demands an equitable distribution of wealth. It postulates the principle that God is the Creator of all things and wealth intrinsically belongs to Him. The talent itself which man applies

to the process of production—is but a gift from God. Hence God claims a share in what is produced and declares that His share must go to those in want. And, as such, it calls upon the rich to give in addition to Zakat or poor-due, 'whatever is surplus' to the poor and the needy (2 : 219). Wealth is to serve useful puposes and not to be accumulated in a few hands (59 : 7).

Economic system of Islam has its own philosophy which is neither Capitalism, nor Communism, nor even European Socialism but a harmonious blend of the material with the spiritual. High moral standards are, therefore, prescribed in the pursuit of wealth. 'Be moderate,' said the Prophet, 'in this pursuit' which implies that 'one should take what is lawful and avoid the unlawful' (Ibn Majah).

The balance maintained by Islam between Capitalism and Communism is aptly described by Prof. Gibb of the University of Oxford:

Within the Western world Islam still maintains the balance between exaggerated opposites. Opposed equally to the anarchy of European nationalism and the regimentation of Russian Communism, it has not yet succumbed to that obsession with the economic side of life which is characteristic of present-day Europe and present-day Russia alike. Its social ethic has been admirably summed up by Professor Massignon: Islam has the merit of standing for a very equalitarian conception of the contribution of each citizen by tithe to the resources of the community: it is hostile to unrestricted exchange, to banking capital, to state loans, to indirect taxes on objects of prime necessity, but

it holds to the rights of the father and the husband, to private property and to commercial capital. Here again it occupies an intermediate position between the doctrine of bourgeois capitalism and Bolshevist Communism' (Gibb, *Whither Islam*, London, 1932, p. 379).

The social ethic of Islam is embodied in the Prophet's conception of mankind as 'a fold, every member of which is a keeper unto other and accountable for the entire fold'. Under such conception there can be neither exploitation, nor selfishness, nor greedy grasp of wealth. The economic system based on such conception is necessarily humane and good. For details we refer the reader to our work, *Economics and Islam*, Islamic Publications, Lahore (Pakistan).

### **(b) Politics of Islam**

While Economics deals with man's activities in pursuit of wealth, the Politics is concerned with the form, organisation, and administration of state. Since economic activities are carried on within the framework of state we have to study the form and features of Islamic state.

Islamic state, as specified above, has to conform to the spirit of Islam which is a practical way of life, hence it does not attach much importance to the external form of government, the enforcement of Divine law being its ideal. The head of Islamic state has delegated powers and is only a Vicegerent of God and, as such, cannot be an autocrat. He himself has to obey the law of God. It is rightly remarked by Fisher that in Islam, 'Law preceded the state which only



existed to enforce the law. If the state failed to enforce the law, the state's validity ceased. The Caliph or Khalifa as head of the state was charged principally with the enforcement of law' (Fisher, *A History of the Middle East*, p. 99).

Islam is both a religion and state. It is of interest to note that pre-Islamic religions did not think it important to study the political organisation as they were merely concerned with religious affairs. This is to the credit of Islam that it has regulated religious as well as worldly affairs. It deals not only with the relations between the Creator and the created but also with the relations between man and man.

God is the Sovereign of Islamic state: 'The Command is for none but God' (12 : 40); 'He is best to command' (12 : 80); 'Blessed is He in Whose hands is the Sovereignty of the Heavens and the Earth and all between them' (43 : 85). He cannot be compared to the Sovereigns of the World, nor is the Islamic state similar to democracy wherein sovereignty is vested with the people. It is a state ruled by Divine law which precedes it and to whose dictates it has ideally to conform.

The purpose of Islamic state is to endow humanity with righteous life and 'its affairs are conducted by mutual consultation' (42 : 38). But there is no single method of consultation. The number, the form of election, the duration of representation etc. are left to be adopted as it suits the given time and place, the essence of consultation being to seek the advice of such as enjoy the public confidence.

As we are chiefly concerned with morality, we

point to the Quranic verses (17 : 23-39), which are the directives for state policy. It will be too lengthy to give here all of them. Suffice it to say that the spiritual and moral duties are, here, brought into juxtaposition. Moderation and temperance which find their expression in these directives testify to the intimate relationship which economics of Islam bears to its politics. In these verses we find principles of morality par excellence as they enjoin upon man kindness to parents, giving to the kindred and the needy their rights, keeping of covenants, giving of full measure and weight, exchange of kind words etc., prohibiting at the same time all immoral acts such as adultery, deceit, false promise etc. The state formed according to such directives cannot be designated by anyone of the terms applied to the different forms of governments known to the world. It is a state unparalleled in its norms of morality.

The moral law expounded in these verses is far in advance of the bare Decalogue (The Ten Commandments) in that it searches out what is inmost in the heart and draws pointed attention to the weak and the helpless, to the needy and the poor. It begins with the mention of the One and Only God which sweeps off other ideas of class and creed, race and nation. It aims at universal brotherhood under the Sovereignty of One God.

Modern theories with regard to the forms of government and the differences of opinion therein may be traced back to Plato's absolutism and Aristotle's constitutionalism. According to Plato, absolutism or despotism is the best form of government which is re-

jected outright by Aristotle, a lover of law and constitutional rule. Islam has solved this problem in its form of government which is a happy synthesis of absolutism and constitutionalism as God's Sovereignty means the superiority of His Wise and Impartial laws which are to be executed by His vicegerent on earth, in consultation with such as enjoy public confidence.

We refer to the problem of collectivism and individualism which has been the issue of fundamental controversy of political thought in the history of Western civilization. Whether the individual or the community is the ultimate value, is a problem which was studied, from the point of justice, by Greek Philosophers centuries before the Christ.

Legal theories assume one of three attitudes : Either they subordinate the individual to the community, or they subordinate the community to the individual, or they attempt to blend the two rival claims.

Modern totalitarianism asserts the supremacy of the community by the complete destruction of individual rights. This is achieved through the abolition of the separation of powers and judicial independence, state supervision of all public and private activities. The Catholic theory of society makes the community supreme over the individual in a different manner, for he has to accept the place and function into which he is born. The most outstanding of all such theories is Marxism which has completely crushed individual rights.

Hobbes stands for individualism but his doctrine

leads to political absolutism. Bentham's utilitarianism, Spincer's theory of evolution all embody in different ways an individualistic philosophy but none of these theories represents perfect balance between the interests of the individual and those of society.

A synthesis between the individual liberty and the interests of society cannot be obtained unless the life of society is based upon righteousness. It cannot be denied that society is but a collection of individuals, the problem is, therefore, to build the character of the individual in such a manner that, far from being injurious to society, he contributes his own good to its welfare. This is achieved by the process of building character through moral education and purification of soul as explained in the preceding pages. It is against such background that the individual is offered full opportunities, in Islam, to develop his personality so that he may be better qualified to serve the interests of society. In this way there can be no clash between the interests of society and those of the individual. Thus the individual is for society and society for the individual.

### **Foreign Policy**

With regard to foreign policy, Muslim international law and its precepts are based upon universal truths. Such precepts apply to the whole humanity regardless of religion and race. Islam is a religion of peace and believes in peaceful co-existence, hence treaties, pacts and covenants are respected and obligations arising out of them faithfully fulfilled:

‘O ye who believe keep your covenants’ (5: 1).

'Verily, of the covenants enquiry shall be made' (17 : 34).

Islam tolerates on its territory, a multiplicity of laws, with autonomous judiciary for each community. A stranger, therefore, belongs to the jurisdiction of his own confessional tribunal. Further, he is allowed to practise customs that are forbidden in Islam. The consumption of alcoholic drinks, for instance, is forbidden to a Muslim, yet a non-Muslim enjoys the liberty not only of its consumption but also of its manufacture and sale. Such is the toleration of Islam which seeks to establish a world order based on the principle of belief in One God.

### **Status of non-Muslims**

The security of life and property, and freedom of religion are ensured to non-Muslim minorities who are styled 'Dhimmi', the protected of God and the Prophet. 'Beware!' proclaimed the Prophet, 'I shall myself be complainant, on the Day of Resurrection, against him who wrongs a 'Dhimmi' or lays on him a responsibility greater than he can bear or deprives him of anything that belongs to him.' (Al-Mawardi, *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyah*, p. 137). So mindful was the Prophet of their safety and welfare that a few moments before he expired, the thought of the 'Dhimmi' came to him and he said: 'Any Muslim who kills a Dhimmi has not the slightest chance of catching even the faintest smell of heaven. Protect them; they are my Dhimmis'. (Bukhari). The Caliph Umar also exclaimed in the same manner, as he lay assassinated:

"To him who will be the Caliph after me, I com-

mend my wish and testament! The 'Dhimis' are protected of God and the Prophet. Respect the covenant entered into with them, and when necessary fight for their interests and do not place on them burden or responsibility which they can not bear' (Bukhari).

In sum, non-Muslims, in the Islamic state, constitute a protected minority and it becomes the duty of the state to protect their person, property and honour. They are not to be defamed and the jurists are agreed on this point that he who violates a non-Muslim woman is to be punished as if he violated a Muslim woman.

## **War**

In sanctioning war, Islam has defined its aims and purposes. They are to suppress tyranny, and to guarantee freedom of belief to all: 'Permission is given (to fight) those who have taken up arms against you wrongfully. And verily, God is Most Powerful to give succour;—to those who have been expelled from you their homes for no other reason than this that they say, 'Our Lord is God'. Had not God repelled some men by others, cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of God is ever mentioned, would assuredly have been pulled down' (22: 29, 40).

These verses relate to the first occasion on which fighting, in self-defence, was allowed to those who were expelled from their homes for no other reason than their worship of One God. Thus war was forced upon the Prophet and he had to fight not only in self-

defence but also to protect the places of worship of all others. Still there are certain critics who contend that Islam was spread by the sword which is not tenable. In addition to the above verses we cite the following to prove that Islam was never aggressive but always inclined to peace:

‘O ye who believe! take to the path of peace and do not follow in the footsteps of Satan; for he indeed is your avowed enemy’ (2 : 208); And if they lean to peace, lean thou also to it, and repose thy trust in God (8 : 61); God doth not forbid you to be kind and fair to those who have not made war upon you because of your faith, or have not driven you forth from your homes, for God indeed loveth those who act with fairness (60 : 8).

In the conduct of war, the Prophet and the Orthodox Caliphs never lost sight of humanitarian considerations enjoined by the Quran. Here we refer to Sir Thomas Arnold who in ‘*The Preaching of Islam*’ has given an account of the conditions drawn up when Jerusalem submitted to the Caliph Umar:

‘I’, says the Caliph Umar, ‘grant them (the inhabitants of Jerusalem) security of lives, their children, their churches, their crosses, and all that appertains to them in their integrity, and their lands, and to all, of their religion’ (Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, p. 51).

In continuation Arnold adds:

‘In company with the Patriarch, Umar visited the holy places, and it is said while they were in the Church of the Resurrection, as it was the appointed hour of prayer, the Patriarch bade the Caliph

offer his prayers there, but he thoughtfully refused, saying that if he were to do so, his followers might afterwards claim it as a place of Muslim worship (*The Preaching of Islam*, p. 51).

'The self-restraint of the conquerors and the humanity which they displayed in their campaigns,' says Arnold, 'must have excited profound respect and secured a welcome for an invading army that was guided by such principles of justice and moderation.'

In view of the above facts it is unfair to say that Islam was spread by the sword. It is, indeed, the moral excellence of Islamic principles, as is evident from the following verses, which caused the spread of Islam:

'Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching and discuss things with them in an agreeable style. Thy Lord knoweth best who hath strayed from His path, and knoweth best who is guided aright' (16 : 125); 'And (bear in mind) good and evil cannot be treated alike. Return good for evil and mark (how good is the result that follows); he who was inimical towards thee shall behave as if he were a warm friend (41 : 34).

Besides, there are rules and etiquette of war. Islamic law does not allow surprise attack nor does it sanction the breach of pacts and treaties. Foreign subjects or *mustamin* are entitled to rights flowing from such pacts as they cannot be violated by reason of war with their country. Even among the enemies of Islam, actively fighting against Islam, there may be individuals who ask for asylum. Full asylum will be



guaranteed to them and they will be escorted to a place of safety (9 : 6).

There are also rules which forbid the killing of the aged, the young, women and others as is evident from the principles of justice and moderation laid down by the Caliph Abu Bakr for the guidance of the first expedition into Syria:

‘Be just; break not your plighted faith; mutilate none, slay neither children, old men, nor women; injure not the date palm nor burn it with fire, nor cut down any fruit bearing tree; slay neither flocks nor birds nor camels, except for food; perchance ye may come across men who have retired into monasteries, leave them and their works in peace (Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, pp. 49, 50).

## **Slavery**

Slavery, in Islam, is only in name, for the Prophet took away the whole spirit of this institution as is evident from the fair treatment meted out to the slaves and equal opportunity offered to them so much so that they became kings, commanders, scholars and jurists of the high rank.

Here we refer to the sermon delivered by the Prophet on the occasion of Farewell Pilgrimage or Hajj:

‘And your slaves! see that ye feed them with such food as ye eat yourselves, and clothe them with the stuff ye wear and if they commit a fault which ye are not inclined to forgive, then part them, for they are the servants of the Lord, and are not to be harshly treated (Ibn Hisham, *Sirat*

*al-Nabawia*, vol. 2, p. 603).

The Quran itself lays great emphasis on freeing the slaves: 'What is spiritual ascent' asks the Quran and itself gives the answer, 'it is freeing the slave' (90 : 13). This is supported by the saying of the Prophet: Nothing pleases God better than to free a slave (Bukhari).

Slaves were never treated as a commodity. In striking contrast to Rome where the slaves had no social status, Islam restored to them human dignity and proclaimed: 'He who kills his slaves, we shall kill him, and who mutilates his nose, we shall cut his nose, and who gelds our slave, we shall get him gelded in return (Bukhari). The Quranic verse (4 : 36) enjoins the believers to be good to the slaves and according to verse (4 : 25) believers are permitted to marry believing bondswomen with the leave of their masters.

The Holy Prophet himself set an example of voluntary emancipation as he freed all his slaves and even brought marriage between an emancipated slave and a free Quraish woman, a relative of his own. Besides, there are other ways prescribed by the Quran which bring to the slaves their freedom. Slaves are to be set free as atonements for sins and to expiate oaths, and for slaying a believer:

'And to who has slain a believer by mistake, he should free a believing slave, and pay an indemnity to his family, unless they forego by way of charity' (4 : 92).

Mukātaba is also a means of freeing slaves. It is the writing of freedom by the master to a slave

on his asking for it in return for a certain amount of money agreed upon by both of them. The master, in such a case, has no option of refusing or delaying the freedom of the slave. He must set him free on recovery of the amount agreed upon or else the slave would bring a suit against his master for his freedom. These are the several ways which ensure the freedom of slaves.

As to the prisoners of war, they were either set free as a favour or released on payment of ransom: 'And thereafter set them free as either a favour or in return for a ransom when the war is over' (47 : 4). The verse does not mention the enslaving of prisoners, it prescribes ransoming or setting them free as a favour. Islam does not insist on taking prisoners of war as slaves.

So far as women are concerned, they are respected even in their captivity and never treated as a common property. They belong to their masters alone and have the right of freedom through 'mukātaba'. Further, a slave girl is considered to be free as soon as she gives birth to a child by her master and the child is also deemed free. Islam never violates the honour of women and treats them respectfully.

### **Status of Women**

Women, in Islam, are considered equal with men in their rights to enter into contracts and to hold property and dispose of it as they wish. They enjoy economic independence and possess all such rights as give them an equal human status with men but they are required to observe certain rules of morality so

that promiscuity may not lead to corruption.

The fundamental principle, with regard to women, is that they should be held in honour; the mother that bore us must ever have reverence, the wife who is our best companion should be treated well. Men and women are quite equal to each other in their origin:

‘O ye mankind! fear your Lord, Who created you of a single soul and He created thereof its spouse and from the pair of them spread abroad many men and women’ (4 : 1).

Surah IV (Nisa or the Women), in the Quran deals with women. It begins with an appeal to the solidarity of mankind, the rights of women and orphans, and the multiplications of family relationship. It recognizes the rights of women pertaining to marriage, property and inheritance. Women as human beings, are entitled to similar rights to life, honour and property. Sex distinction which is a distinction in nature does not count in spiritual matters. The reward for both sexes for their good deeds is similar, both male and female, men and women are considered as members of a family.

### **Says God**

‘I will not let go waste the deed of a worker amongst you—male or female, one of you being from the other’ (3 : 195).

The equal status of sex is thus recognized in spiritual matters and they are also equal in their rights to live an honourable life. The position of women as mother is highly exalted and, according to the Pro-

phet, 'Paradise lies underneath the feet of mothers' and man is enjoined to be kind to his parents and particularly to the mother who bore him in pain and in plain did she give him birth (46 : 15).

As reported by both Bukhari and Muslim, when a man asked the Prophet as to who had the first claim to his good treatment, 'mother' was the answer, the same answer was repeated three times and he thereafter said 'then your father'.

So far as wife is concerned the Quran says: 'Live with them on a footing of kindness and equity' (4 : 19), and as reported by Tirmidhi the Prophet said: 'Best among you is he who is good to his wife.' In his memorable address on the occasion of Farewell Pilgrimage or Hajj, the Prophet called upon men to be kind to women and pay heed to their rights:

'Ye people! Ye have rights over your wives, and your wives have rights over you. Treat your women with kindness—verily, ye have taken them on security of God, and made them lawful unto you by the words of God'.

Islam is just a practical system of life. While giving to women their rights it does not lose sight of their nature, and differentiates between man and woman when such differentiation becomes necessary according to their nature and the functions which they have to perform in life. 'Men are the maintainers of women because of what Allah has made some of them excel others and by reason of what they spend out of their wealth (4 : 34). This points to the duties of wives, foremost among them is to guard their virtues and remain obedient to their husbands and also to

protect their interests in their absence as ordained by God.

The duties of a wife as above are in response to the duties of her husband towards her as he is responsible for food, clothing and other needs. In some of the cases it seems that the husband enjoys some authority over his wife but she has the right to demand divorce of him if she fears ill-treatment of her husband. In this case she should give back to her husband the dowry she received from him as the husband too, in the event of divorcing his wife, has to forego all that he gave her. The marriage may be dissolved if she proves before the court that she has been ill-treated by the husband or he failed to give sustenance allowance agreed upon between them. The most effective weapon is to secure the right to divorce from her husband at the time of entering into marriage contract with him.

It must be borne in mind that woman is created by God as a mate for man :

‘And one of the signs is that He hath created for you mates of your own species that ye find comfort in their company; and (with that end in view) hath put between you love and tenderness’ (30 : 21).

Man and wife are so closely attached to each other that they are treated each other's garments (2 : 187). In other words, they are for mutual support, mutual comfort, and mutual protection, fitting into each other as garment fits the body. Woman, as such, is allowed to have husband of her own choice and cannot be given in marriage without her consent. The Prophet, as reported by both Bukhari and Muslim, has

said:

‘No widow should be married without consulting her; and no virgin without her consent and her consent is her silence.’ The marriage is dissolved if she declared that it was without her consent.’

Unlimited number of wives of the pre-Islamic period was limited to four only and that too under strict condition. The door for polygamy is left open to meet emergencies. War, for instance, takes a heavy toll of men and the balance between the sexes is seriously shaken, or the wife falls sick for an unlimited period and sometimes the disease becomes incurable so as to render the sexual union impossible and it is in such cases that polygamy becomes a social necessity.

With regard to the right of women to work and move in public, it may be said that Islam does not forbid them but they are not supposed to abandon themselves to promiscuity and make a display of their figure or appear in undress. History bears witness to the fact that in the days of the Holy Prophet and those of the rightly-guided Caliphs women took an active part in life. They worked as nurses, teachers, and engaged themselves in such professions as suited them but they were, at the same time, bound to observe strictly the rules of morality and never to mix with men indiscriminately.

Modesty, according to the Prophet is the branch of faith, hence the need for modesty is the same in both men and women. But on account of the differentiation of the sexes in nature, temperaments, and social life, a greater amount of privacy is required for women

than men:

‘Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze (before women) and guard their modesty; that shall make for greater purity for them; and God is well acquainted with all that they do’ (24 : 30).

‘And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze (before men) and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof and draw their veils over their bosoms’ (24 : 31).

The chastity of women is, therefore, greatly stressed in Islam. The more so, because women are the sole breeders of the offspring and their character has a direct effect upon them. The respect, in which women are held in Islam, is manifest in the fact, that one who accuses them of immorality and does not prove it is liable to the punishment of eighty lashes and also declared unworthy of giving evidence before a court of justice (in addition to Divine punishment in the Hereafter).

There may be a question : Why should woman be treated as inferior to man with regard to inheritance and evidence? So far as the law of inheritance is concerned the shares of different heirs vary according to individual circumstances but it cannot be denied that there is a principle according to which the male gets twice the share of the female :

‘A male shall have as much as the share of two females’ (4 : 11).

The inequality between male and female is due



to the fact that the female, in addition to what she inherits, is entitled to dowry from her husband over and above her maintenance allowance. Further, she has lesser obligations to fulfil than those of man. Man is of the sterner sex and, as such, has to struggle for life, earn livelihood and maintain his family. It is here that there is a distinction between man and woman. They are, no doubt, equally important component parts of society; but their functions in life differ which make a difference between them. The physical constitution which befits a woman for her specialized functions of conceiving and suckling is not the same for man. Man is tough and hardy, while woman is weak and emotional. She is often overcome by emotions and cannot maintain the balance of mind. The evidence of two women is therefore equivalent to that of one man, for if the one (of the two women) erreth the other will remember (2 : 282).

In the end we have to say that Islam takes into consideration the rights of even a non-Muslim wife of a Muslim. Muslims are allowed to marry such women as belong to the people of the Book (e.g. Christian and Jewess). Such wives are allowed to retain their religion throughout their life :

‘There being no compulsion in religion’ (2 : 256).

The economic and political systems, as specified above point to the fact that they are free from extremes and possess all the qualities of a morally good life which discards everything that is evil and follows the principles of justice.

Three steps are mentioned so far as family disputes are concerned:

‘As for those (women) on whose part ye fear rebellious attitude, admonish them, and keep away from them in their beds and chastise them; but if they obey you, seek not a way against them. Verily Allah is High, Great’ (4 : 34).

Here it may be noted that according to Shafii some slight physical correction may be administered if suspension of sex relations is not sufficient to correct the wife, while all authorities are unanimous in depreciating all sorts of cruelty. According to Bukhari, the Prophet said:

‘Let none of you scourge his wife the scourge of camel and then towards the end of the day have intercourse with her.’

Men are ordained to live all their life in the presence of God, never seeking occasion to annoy their wives if they are obedient. An excellent plan to settle family disputes is given in the very following verse:

‘And if you fear a breach between them (the couple) set up an arbiter from his household and an arbiter from her household; (then) if they desire reconciliation, Allah will effect harmony between them. Verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware’ (4 : 35).

In its capacity to absorb all that is good in life and foster good human relations, Islamic social system is par excellence and unparalleled in human history. This, we have proved in our work *Sociology and Islam*, Islamic Publications Ltd., Lahore (Pakistan).

# 11

## *Distinctive Features of Islamic Moral Philosophy*

As Islam is a universal religion and for all time, so is its moral philosophy. Philosophers are called the lovers of wisdom and their efforts are directed to know the ultimate reality. For this purpose they rely either on Reason or on Senses but both these are very limited sources. Human faculties of sense and reasoning, in their very nature, are incapable of arriving at accurate and sure knowledge of the ultimate realities. Why go into details, the very fact that no two philosophers entirely agree on a point is the proof of uncertainty of the knowledge derived from these sources. Further, Descartes denounces sensory knowledge and Kant has proved the limitation of reason. Revelation alone is the source of sure and genuine knowledge of things. Islam being a revealed religion its philosophy is truthful and the only philosophy which can be relied upon. Further, a philosopher being born and bred in a certain atmosphere and environment cannot claim to be free from its influence. However high he may rise, still he retains some of its marks deeply imprinted in his mind which express themselves in his work.

Philosophers are, therefore, the outcome of their milieu and philosophies and particularly moral philosophies the products of their times. Not so with Islam which is for all time.

In regard to the classical theories, which we have dealt with, Hedonism, Cynicism and Stoicism all these moral philosophies are clearly the products of their times. They are called the philosophies of consolation as the collapse of the Greek city states had left no hope of social reconstruction, consequently they consist of advice to individual men for attaining personal salvation. Since men who suffer great catastrophes grasp at pleasure as providing some comfort Hedonism declared that 'pleasure is the sole good', while Cynicism and Stoicism thought it better to announce; 'learn to be indifferent to external influences'! This was to avoid frustration, heart break and despair in a crumbling world of their times. Cynics were more depressed than stoics. They felt that they were powerless to prevent the collapse of the world in which they lived and hence renounced it. Thus, moral philosophies are the products of their times, while the moral philosophy of Islam is for all time.

It is interesting to note that according to Will Durant 'there are but three systems of ethics, three conceptions of the ideal character and the moral life. One is that of Buddha and Jesus, which stresses the feminine virtues, considers all men to be equally precious, resists evil only by returning good, identifies virtue with love, and inclines in politics to unlimited democracy. Another is the ethic of Machiavelli and Nietzsche, which stresses the masculine virtues, accepts

the inequality of men, relishes the risks of combat and conquest and rule, identifies virtue with power, and exalts an hereditary aristocracy. A third, the ethic of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, denies the universal applicability of either the feminine or the masculine virtues; considers that only the informed and mature mind can judge, according to diverse circumstances, when love should rule, and when power; identifies virtue, therefore, with intelligence; and advocates a varying mixture of aristocracy and democracy in government.

It is the distinction of Spinoza that his ethic unconsciously reconciles these apparently hostile philosophies, weaves them into a harmonious unity which is the supreme achievement of modern thought.' (Will Durant, *Outlines of Philosophy*, pp. 165, 166).

Before we proceed to discuss the moral philosophy of Spinoza who is considered as one of the towering figures in the history of ethics, we deem it necessary to point out that every great religion starts with certain conceptions with regard to the nature of man and the universe. The psychological implication of Buddhism, for instance, is the central fact of pain as a dominating element in the constitution of the universe. Man, as an individual, is helpless against the forces of pain, hence salvation lies in inaction; self-abnegation and unworldliness are the principal virtues. Similarly Christianity as a religious system is based on the fact of sin. The world is regarded evil and taint of sin is considered as hereditary to man, and man as a force against sin is insufficient, hence stands in need of some supernatural personality to intercede for him with

God—a Redeemer is required to get rid of sin. Islam admits that pain and sin certainly exist but the universe is not essentially evil, it can be reformed and the seemingly destructive forces of nature may be brought under control through an appropriate study of them. Now we turn to Spinoza.

He begins by making happiness the goal of conduct and defines happiness in terms of pleasure. He is a relativist, for he holds that nothing is good or bad in itself but is only so in relation to someone. He does not believe in altruism and is a rigid determinist. This is, in a nutshell, his moral philosophy.

In holding happiness as pleasure he seems to have ignored the fact that there is a vast difference between happiness and pleasure. According to Dewey 'there is no such thing strictly speaking as a pleasure; pleasure is pleasantness, an abstract noun designating objects that are pleasant, agreeable. And any state of affairs is pleasant or agreeable which is congenial to the existing state of a person whatever that may be.' As already stated, he remarks:

'What is agreeable at one time disagrees at another; what pleases in health is distasteful in fatigue or illness; what annoys or disgusts in a state of repulsion is gratifying when one is hungry and eager. And on a higher scale, that which is pleasant to a man of generous disposition arouses aversion in a mean and stingy person. What is pleasant to child may bore an adult; the objects that gratify a scholar are repulsive to a boor. Pleasantness and unpleasantness are accordingly signs and symptoms of the things which at a particular time are congenial to a particular

make-up of the organism and character. And there is nothing in a symptom of the quality of an existing character which fits it to be a desirable end' (Dewey, *Ethics*, p. 213)

'Happiness, on the contrary, is a stable condition, because it is dependent not upon what transiently happens to us but upon the standing disposition of the self. One may find happiness in the midst of annoyances; be contented and cheerful inspite of a succession of disagreeable experiences, if one has braveness and equanimity of soul.' Agreeableness or pleasure, he says, depends upon the way a particular event touches us; it tends to focus attention on the self, so that a love of pleasures as such tends to render one selfish or greedy, while happiness is a matter of the disposition we actively bring with us to meet situations, the qualities of mind and heart with which we greet and interpret situations.

'Briefly, happiness as distinct from pleasure is a condition of the self. There is a difference between a tranquil pleasure of the self and tranquillity of mind; there is contentment with external circumstances because they cater to our immediate enjoyment, and there is contentment of character and spirit which is maintained in adverse circumstances' (Dewey, *Ethics*, p. 214).

Happiness is thus much higher and nobler than pleasure. As George Eliot remarked in her novel *Romola* 'it is only a poor sort of happiness that could ever come by caring very much about our own narrow pleasures. We can only have the very highest happiness, such as goes along with being a great man, by

having wide thought and much feeling for the rest of the world as well as ourselves' (Dewey, *Ethics*, p. 214). Islam hates the idea of sensualistic evaluation of good as pleasure which is but Hedonistic.

Spinoza is relativist in that he admits that good or bad is only in relation to someone. From this point of view even a bad thing becomes good as a crafty, unscrupulous man considers frauds to be good. Platonism may argue in favour of Spinoza that knowledge is necessary, no wicked act can be committed if the doer knows its nature. But there are men who despite their knowledge of wickedness persist in it. Platonism has no answer to it. Kantian theory may come to defend Spinoza but its categorical imperative which means 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you' will be of no avail and becomes inoperative in case there is a clash between one's own benefit and benefit of others. There are occasions when self-love is uncontrollable and men have strong tendency to treat their own satisfaction as of higher value. Without the backing of moral character neither Platonism nor Kantian theory can be successful, let alone Spinoza who is a relativist to the core. Islam, therefore, lays great emphasis on moral character and builds it in its own way as specified above.

Spinoza does not believe in altruism—regard for others as a principle of action. He is more inclined towards egoism—a theory which regards self-interest as the foundation of morality. The problem is that of the relation of egoism and altruism, of regard for self and regard for others, of self-love and benevolence. The issue concerns the motivation of moral act. It is



generally held that men are moved only by self-love or regard for their own self, i.e., selfishness. But 'acts are not selfish because they evince consideration for the future well-being of the self. No one would say that deliberate care for one's own health, efficiency and progress in learning is bad because it is one's own. It is moral duty upon occasion to look out for oneself in these respects. Such acts acquire the quality of moral selfishness only when they are indulged in so as to manifest obtuseness to the claims of others. An act is not wrong because it advances the well-being of the self, but because it is unfair, inconsiderate, in respect to the rights and just claims of others. Self-sustaining and self-protective acts are, moreover, conditions of all acts which are of service to others. Any moral theory which fails to recognize the necessity of acting sometimes with special care and conscious regard for oneself is suicidal; to fail to care for one's health or even one's material well-being may result in incapacitating one for doing anything for others (Dewey, *Ethics*, p. 326).

Here it becomes clear that regard for self, if it is conscious, is regard for others. It is only the blind regard for self which is injurious to others as it often results in 'a war of all against all'. The point becomes more clear if we study the Quranic verse (3 : 92) in its proper perspective. The verse is: 'By no means shall ye attain righteousness unless ye give of that which ye love.' The test of charity is: Do you give something which you love or value greatly?

The problem is of altruism and self-sacrifice which has been admirably solved by the Prophet. As related

by Anas, Abu Talha, having heard of this fresh revelation, came to the Prophet and offered his highly valued garden to be given in charity. The Prophet appreciated the spirit but advised him to distribute it among his own relatives. Further, when Umar approached the Prophet and asked his opinion as to giving away, in charity, his best garden in Khyber, the Prophet advised him to keep the garden for himself and give away only the produce in charity. This proves that regard for others is not disregard for self. The self is to be cared for and developed so that it may be of greater service to others. But this does not mean thoughtless development of self nor does it mean self-destruction but it means a careful development having in mind one's duties to others. This is the meaning of altruism in Islam, but spinoza is unaware of it.

A rich man is not supposed to live like an ascetic, for God, as said the Prophet, likes to see the traces of His bounty in his creature. 'Say: who hath forbidden the beautiful (gifts) of God which He hath produced for his servants, and the things clean and pure (which He hath provided) for sustenance?' is the Quranic verse. The gifts of God are to be utilized properly and not to be spent extravagantly: 'O ye who believe! Squander not your wealth in varities (4 : 29). What is essentially required of man is the harmonious development of body and soul together. 'Thy soul has a right on you, thy body has a right on you' are the words of the Prophet which point to the importance of life in equilibrium and moderation.

The conception of common good, of general well-being, demands the full development of individuals.

Only when individuals are well developed that they are better able to make sacrifice and serve the interests of others. Perhaps, it is on this account that the saying is: 'Regard for self is regard for others.' But, in Islam, this refers not to blind regard but to thoughtful regard for self which reminds it of its duties to others.

Here it may be said that the Quran praises those 'who prefer others above themselves though poverty become their lot' (59 : 9). But this relates to grave situations which demand wholesale sacrifice or self-surrender. The Helpers at Madina, for instance, offered full help to those who, leaving all their property of Mecca, had migrated to Madina for the cause of God. Abu Bakr, for example, offered whole of his property to defend Islam on the occasion of expedition to Tabuk. On such occasions we have to surrender all that we have and even our own self.

Spinoza is a rigid determinist. To him, all things come and pass according to the eternal order and fixed laws of Nature and man can liberate himself from the pain and anxieties of this world if he understands that the course of Nature is predestined. In this respect he is similar to the Stoics who find salvation in the 'Philosophy of Indifference' which is, in fact, the life of inertness.

Islam is dynamic and has no liking for inertia: 'And neglect not thy portion of this world; but be bounteous to others even as God hath been to thee and seek not to work mischief in the land. Verily, God loveth not the mischief-makers' is the Quranic verse (28 : 77), which enjoins man not to be inert and sluggish but to work hard and earn as much as possible by fair

means so that he may satisfy his own needs and be of help to his brethren-in-want. The real happiness in life is that which comes to man in being bounteous to others as God has been to him. Charity has its own reward.

Spinoza, like Stoics, is obsessed with the idea of predestination but Islam solves it in its own way.

# 12

## *Predestination*

This has been the most disputed problem in the past and continues to be so in the present. For, if everything is determined or predestined by God, why should man be held responsible for his acts? This issue has given birth to two parties of opposite views—Jabriyya or Fatalists and Qadriyya who are opposed to Fatalists.

To Fatalists, God must be tyrant and unjust if He punishes man for acts which are not under his power and control. As opposed to this view, the Qadriyya hold that God is Just and is bound to be so. He would not punish man for such acts as are not in his power. Man, they say, has complete power over his actions: he has free-will and also choice and, as such, responsible for his acts.

Before we enter into further details, let us try to know, in the light of Quranic verses, the scheme of God and how it is carried out. It cannot be denied that God has power over all things (67 : 1). He created all things and ordered them in due proportions (2 : 52). He also created Death and Life, that

He may try which of His creatures (men) is best in deed (67 : 2). Creation, therefore, is not without a purpose. God has created things with a measure (54 : 49) and also created their opposites, for things are known through their opposites. Night has been created to know the importance of Day and *vice versa*. Thus, world has been made a glittering show with all sorts of things to test the quality of man: 'That which is on earth, We have made but a glittering show for the earth, in order that We test them—as to which of them is of best conduct' (18 : 7). Evil and Good are both created by God as a trial, and test for us: 'And We test you by evil and by good by way of trial, to Us must ye return' (21 : 35).

As to the Will of God, 'He doeth what He will' (2 : 253). This is further supported by the Qurānic verses: 'Thy Lord is doer of what He will' (11 : 107). 'His verily is all Creation and Commandment' (7 : 54).

It may be noted that there are two aspects of His Commandment—Commandment relating to Creation (*amr takwini*) and Commandment relating to Right Conduct (*amr tashrii*). Creation includes both what He likes and what He dislikes, for example, He created the Devil and wickedness, while Righteousness is His love and approval. Man has to choose for himself, what is liked by God, with the help of the Rules of Right Conduct. Wickedness and sin do not fall under His liking and approval: 'He loveth not mischief' (2 : 205). 'He liketh not ingratitude from His servants' (39 : 7). And when ingratitude and wickedness transgress their limits punishment becomes inevitable. Even then God's Mercy gives every chance to the wicked to mend them-

selves and to repent. They are given a definite warning and if they still persist in their wickedness, the charge is proved against them and it is at this stage that God's Commandment takes effect: 'When We decide to destroy a township, We send Commandment to its folk who live at ease, and afterwards they commit abomination therein, and so the Word (or doom) hath effect for it, and We destroy it utterly' (17: 16); and it was never God's (part) that He should send a folk astray after He had guided them until He had made clear unto them what they should avoid' (9 : 115).

God's will is expressive of His unlimited power which renders everything possible for Him. 'He cannot be questioned for His acts but men will be questioned for theirs' (21: 23). He may forgive whom He pleaseth and punish whom He pleaseth but, at the same time, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful (3 : 129). This shows the tremendous Power which He commands and can use it at His Will and Pleasure but His Mercy gives chances to men so that they may correct themselves. If they fail to do so, it becomes just and fair for God to set seal on their hearts and on their hearing (2 : 7), and give rope to such as do not receive guidance and try them in their contumacy and then mete out a severe punishment for them. All this shows that God is not tyrant.

The Quranic verses which deal with God's severe penalty indicate His Power and Possibility to do anything but the use of such power is not without justice. Although God can deal with His creatures in whatever manner He likes and is not bound by any law to be just, yet 'not one will He treat with injustice' (18 : 46);

‘nor shall He suffer to perish the reward of any who do a (single) righteous deed’ (18 : 30). ‘He never harms those who serve Him’ (3 : 182); ‘nor is He unjust’ (41 : 46).

From the foregoing it is proved that God is just and deals justly and as such, His determining of good and evil cannot be without justice. Further what is pre-determined is not known to us, so why dispute it and call its fairness in question and why not believe in His Justice and Mercifulness. The best course is, therefore, to have implicit trust in the justness of God and ascribe every good to Him and evil to ourselves: ‘Whatever good (O man!) happens to thee, is from God; but whatever evil happens to thee is from thyself’ (4 : 97). We have no reason to doubt God’s fairness Who takes into consideration even an atom’s weight of good and evil and passes His judgement in accordance therewith: ‘And whoso doeth good an atom’s weight will see it then, and whoso doeth the atom’s weight of evil will see it then’ (99 : 7,8).

We cannot evaluate our acts. May be, we pride ourselves on our works and take them to be the righteous ones but in the judgement of God they are quite reverse. We may be under the impression that our efforts will be rewarded, while we are among ‘those whose efforts have been wasted in this life, but they thought they were acquiring good by their works’ (18 : 104). We cannot judge our acts, God alone is the best judge.

Coming to the question of the Fatalists we feel that they are unnecessarily obsessed with the idea of determination. They must always expect good from



God, for He does not intend anything evil for His creatures. Even in the severe punishment which He has meted out there is our welfare. To meet the strict claims of justice, equality is prescribed in cases of murder (2: 179). Life is taken for a life and in this law of equality, says the Quran, is the saving of life. And, indeed, it saves lives, being a lesson for all. Though the life of the murderer is lost but it brings peace to the society. Likewise hands of the thief are cut off (5 : 41) and in this lies the safety of property and protection of innocent people from crime. All the acts of God are, therefore, a Mercy to mankind and in their own interest.

We do not know what is really good for us and what is evil, 'Perchance ye dislike a thing which is good for you and that ye like a thing which is bad for you but God knoweth and ye know not' (2 : 216). So instead of questioning the predestination, of which we know nothing it is profitable to beseech God for His guidance and entreat Him to give what is good for us. The Prophet has rightly prescribed *istikhara* (asking good of God) in place of discussion on this topic. God in all His bountiful Mercy may grant us, what we ask for. 'Call Me', says He, 'I will answer your prayer.' (40: 60). Further, He has the power to efface the evil: 'God doth efface what He will and establishes what He will and with Him is the source of ordinance' (13 : 39).

Here the question may arise that God's knowledge of things would be defective if such changes take place. To this we answer that He is All-Powerful and can withhold Decree of Command which brings destiny into existence.

And it is for this reason that the Prophet laid stress on prayers. 'Pray often and in real earnest,' said he, 'for prayers can avert that which is inevitable (destiny).' We have to act upon it, for it is possible that God might have intended for us a better destiny on account of our entreaty and earnest prayer. Thus, His knowledge of things cannot be defective.

The followers of the Prophet asked him once as to what actually predestination meant and whether they should cease to work, for what is pre-destined is bound to happen. The Prophet in answer, exhorted them to work and to do righteous deeds and cited the Quranic verse:

'As for him who giveth (in charity) and is dutiful (toward God) and believeth in goodness: surely We will make smooth for him the Path of Bliss. But he who is greedy miser and deemeth himself self-sufficient and disbelieveth in goodness; surely We will make smooth for him the Path of Misery' (92 : 5-10).

This is the best solution offered by the Prophet. Obsessed with the idea of determinism we should not cease to work, nor be indifferent to the world. The Path of Bliss will be made smooth for us if we have faith in God and do righteous deeds. For details, we refer the reader to our work *Islam, its Theology and the Greek Philosophy*, Islamic Publications, Ltd. Lahore (Pakistan).

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## NON-ARABIC TITLES

Anderson, J. N. D., *Islamic Law in the Modern World*, London, 1959.

Arnold, T., *The Preaching of Islam*, Constable Co., London, 1913.

Baldwin, W. M., *The Story of the Mind*, New York 1912.

Barker, E., *Greek Political Theory : Plato and his Predecessors*, London 1951.

Bentham, J., *The theory of Legislation*, Ed. Ogdon, C. K. London, 1931.

Dewey, J., James, H. T., *Ethics*, New York 1936.

Durant, W., *Outlines of Philosophy*, London, 1962.

England, E. B., *The Laws of Plato*, Manchester 1921.

Friedmann, W., *Legal Theory*, 5th edn, London 1967.

Fuller, B. A. G., and Murrin, S. M., *A History of Modern Philosophy*, New York, 1955.

Gibb, H. A. R., *Whither Islam*, London 1932.

Gide, C., and Rest, C., *A History of Economic Doctrines*, London 1960.

Hall, G. H., *Founders of Modern Philosophy*, New York 1912.

Hicks, R. D., *Stoic and Epicurian*, London, 1911.

Hitti, P. K., *History of the Arabs*, London, 1958.

Hume D., *Selections*, ed. Charles, W. H., New York, 1927.

Jackson, R. H., Fore word to *Law in the Middle East*, ed. Khadduri and Libesny, Washington, 1955.

Joad, C. E. M., *Philosophy*, London. 1965.

Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. Smith, N. K., New York. 1958.

Muslehuddin, M., *Economics and Islam*, Lahore, 1974 ; *Islam its Theology and the Greek Philosophy*, Lahore 1974 ; *Sociology and Islam*, Lahore 1977, *Philosophy of Islamic Law and the Orientalists*, Lahore, 1978.

Parsons, T., *The Social Systems*, London, 1970.

Pokin, R. H., and Stroll, A., *Philosophy Made Simple*, London, 1956.

Russell, B., *Human Society in Ethics and Politics* London, 1954; *History of Western Philosophy*, London, 1971.

Sabine, G. H., *A History of Political Theory*, London 1951.

Schacht, J., *An Introduction to Islamic Law*, Oxford 1964.

Spencer, H., *Principles of Sociology*, New York 1816.

Toynbee, A., *A Study of History*, Oxford, 1947.

## ARABIC TITLES

Al-Baihaqui, Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn al-Hussain, *Sunan al-Kubra*, Hyderabad, 1352 A.H.

Al-Bukhari, Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail *Sahih' Bulaq*, 1879.

Al-Ghazzali, Abu Hamid Muhammed, *Al-Mustasfa min Ilam al-Usul*, Cairo, 1937.

Al-Jassas, Abu Bakr, *Al-Ahkam al-Quran*, Cairo 1347 A.H.

Al-Kasani, Alauddin, *Badai al-Sanai*, Cairo, 1327-28 A. H.

Al-Mawardi, Abu al-Hasan Ali bin Muhammed, *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah*, Cairo, 1960.

Al-Razi, Fakhruddin, *Tafsir Kabir*, Cairo, n.d.

Al-Sarakhasi, Shamsuddin, *Al Mubsut*, Cairo, 1906-13.

Al-Shafii, Muhammad ibn Idris *Al-Umm*, Bulaq 1320-25 A.H.

Al-Shatibi, Abu Ishaq, *Al-Muwafiqat*, Cairo, n.d.

Al-Tabari, Muhammad ibn Jarir, *Tafsir al-Tabari*, Cairo 1955.

Al-Tirmidhi Muhammad ibn Isa, *al-Jami*, Cairo, n.d.

Ibn Hisham, *Sirat al-Nabawiyyah*, Cairo 1955.

Ibn Kathir, Imaduddin Abu al-Fida, *Tafsir*, Beirut 1969.

Ibn Nujaym, Zyn al-Abidin, *Al-Ashbha wa al-Nazair*, Cairo 1322. A.H.

Ibn Rushd, *Bidayat al-Mujtahid*, Cairo 1960.

Ibn Taymiyyah, Taqiuddin, *Al-Siyasat al-Sharia*, Cairo, 1969.

Abu Ubayed, Qasim bin Sallam, *Kitab al-Amwal*, Cairo, 1353 A. H.

Abu Yusuf, Yaqub bin Ibrahim, *Kitab al-Kharaj*, Cairo 1352 A. H.

Muslim, Abu al-Husayn, *Sahih*, Cairo 1955.

Wali al-Din al-Tabrizi, *Mishkat al-Masabih*, Damascus, 1381 A. H.

Yahya ibn Adam al-Qurashi, *Kitab al-Kharaj*, Cairo, 1347 A. H.